Rugby Union Tetley's Cup, quarter finals

Northampton clip Falcons' wings

Robert Kitson at Franklin Gardens

NEWCASTLE defeats, like Robin Reliants on the M1, come past only rarely and this particular one, 17-7 by an impressive Northampton side last Saturday, had to be seen to be believed. A shuddering cup tie stacked with commitment and passion was quite simply a wonderful occasion for those who foam at "rugby basketball" or have been longing to see the Falcons slam-dunked by traditional means.

Northampton, beaten twice in the league already this season by Dean Ryan's enforcers, defiantly battened down their haloes and tackled like demons to inflict the visitors' first domestic defeat in 20 games this season.

Franklins Gardens is scarcely a rugby cathedral to rival Twickenham but Rob Andrew, Newcastle's director of rugby, felt the 8,300 crowd had witnessed the next best thing to an international. "That's not much below international standard," he said. "With respect, I think the top four or five sides in the first division [Premiership One] would beat Wales, Scotland and Ireland, and Northampton are in that category."

Also in keeping with current Five Nations practice, Northampton spent part of Saturday evening studying video evidence before considering whether to cite Pat Lam for the punch in injury-time which broke an unsuspecting Gregor Townsend's nose, opting eventually not to proceed. It might have been a different story had they lost but a grubby aftermath would have detracted from a wholesome encounter.

There were a host of impressive individuals, not least Grant Seely and Matt Allen for Northampton and the Falcons' pantomime villain Ryan, whose 29th-minute try put his side 7-6 ahead at half-time. Yet the day was defined by three tackles. The first, a classic big hit by Tim Rodber on Va'aiga Tuigamala, is destined for video immortality; then Allen's improbable success in catching and stopping a flying Tony Underwood in the second half which merely enhanced his growing reputation.

The third, by Matt Dawson with less than two minutes of normal time left and Newcastle 14-7 down, nailed the game. A sniping Gary Armstrong looked certain to score, only for Dawson somehow to flip the Scotland captain backwards just shy of the line. Paul Grayson's second drop goal in injury-time completed a job expertly done.

If Newcastle's discipline wobbled at crucial times, conspicuously in the 58th minute when a forward scuffle disrupted their defensive cordon sufficiently to allow Allen to exploit the narrow side and dive over from Ian Hunter's cleverly timed pass, it reinforced Ian McGeechan's opinions about club rugby's place in any revised English structure. "It's interesting that the two countries who are doing so well at the moment have a club-based game," said the Northampton coach knowingly. "What else do you want? You've got talented players from around the world, you've got pressure, you've got an atmosphere and you've got players who have to perform. I don't think it comes much harder than that at any level."



Double indemnity . . . Newcastle's Richard Arnold, left, and Dean Ryan put the squeeze on Matt Dawson PHOTO: DAVID RODGERS

We also learned something new about Newcastle, branded "the dirtiest side in the competition" by the Northampton lock Jason Chandler in the local paper on the eve of the game. Outside the ground before the kick-off they were even discussing which of the Falcons should be set upon by a slavering Alsatian dog, its collar decorated in Northampton colours.

"Ryan'll be sent off anyway, we need to get Andrew," insisted a gateman. In fact, apart from Lam's late indiscretion and Paul Van Zandvliet's yellow card for a swinging attempted late tackle, the harshest verdict on the visitors was that they took defeat well. Only a side with the necessary oomph, though, can hope to overtake them in the league.

Robert Armstrong writes: Wasps, fizzing with creativity, went a long way towards redeeming a mediocre season with a 41-7 victory over London Irish at Sunbury last Saturday. The Wasps captain Lawrence Dallaglio had every reason to feel satisfied with such a rich haul of points, including four tries, against opponents who had beaten Wasps in a league game in the autumn.

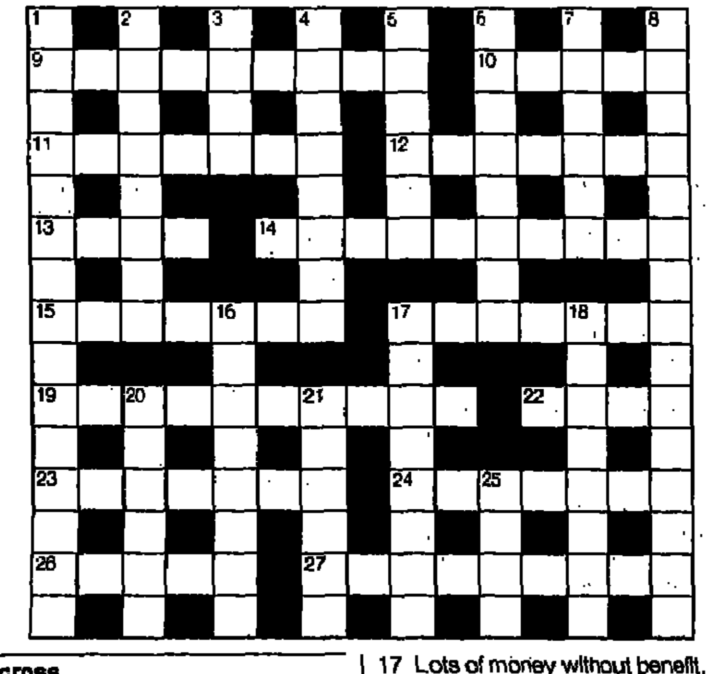
Wasps would have added to that try count had their handling been slicker but it was the Irish who committed the more costly errors, allowing Gareth Rees to rack up 21 points, including five penalties. It was a sobering experience for the visitors' new coach Dick Best.

Wasps quickly seized control up front. Dallaglio exercised substantial influence, and for long periods the Irish offered only token resistance. In effect Wasps had the game won by half-time thanks to two converted tries plus four penalty goals. Early in the second half David Humphreys was substituted by Sean Burns, whose adventurous play-making enabled the Irish to make a more positive impact. After Rees had landed his fifth penalty goal the Irish finally got off the mark with a try by Conor O'Shea.

Such temerity in breaching the Wasps line merely roused their opponents from near complacency and the Irish conceded two more tries in the closing stages.

Semi-final draw: Wasps v Sale; Northampton v Saracens. Ties to be played March 28

Cryptic crossword by Araucaria



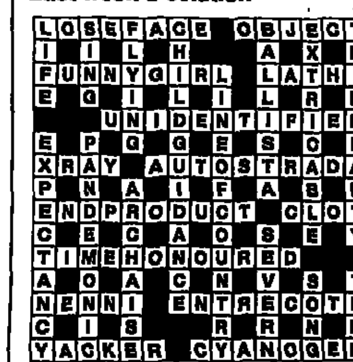
Across

9 26 5's day off with model recently (4,5)
10 Khan at home, khan at home . . . (5)
11, 20, 4, 27 Abstain, well born person, from pursuing the subject; and farewell (26,5) (2,3,2,6,4,4,4,5)
12 West to sort out class performer (7)
13 Messenger about apple (4)
14 Card game (duple form) ordered by referee? (8,2)
15 Rowland was sarcastic? A very little (4,3)
17 Lots of money without benefit, without love, makes a fast heart (3-4)
19 Baby-minder gives one a leg up with GCSE (3-7)
22 Attempt crazy return (4)
23 Make 20 or more, with good girl backing the French (7)
24 Dog should (not the other way round) get the bird (7)
26, 5 Bob and Gray, maybe, the poets' poet (5,6)
27 See 11

Down

1 See 3
2 A newspaper icon confused the capital (8)
3, 1 Time off, in the style of perishin' subject's publicity, begins Keats's poem's story (1,3,1,4,2,3,5)
4 See 11
5 See 26
6 Beginning of title of Keats's poem entitled . . . (8)
7 Supporter on his own is a fidget (6)
8 Revenue docked by tail I tip off, not a fitting quality (15)
16 Giving away secrets, like the brook left earlier on (8)
17 Power circles in 20, under which 26 5 wrote (4,4)
18 Make an enemy of Sergeant Turner (8)
20 See 11
21 Hammer plant that's withered round lake in Keats's poem (6)
25 Go with the band (4)

Last week's solution



Golf Dubai Desert Classic

Olazábal finds perfect tonic

David Davies in Dubai

ONE year to the week after José Maria Olazábal returned to competitive golf, he won the Desert Classic.

The Spaniard, out of golf for 18 months, made his comeback here last year, finished 12th and promised to return and win. Last Sunday, against unimaginable odds, he did so.

Before the start he was strongly advised by a doctor not to play after contracting pharyngitis. He had a temperature of 39.4C and "every muscle ached". The doctor told him, "You must not play," and he responded by asking the tournament director: "Is it my decision or his?" On being told it was his own, he decided to carry on.

That decision, brave or stubborn, paid off not simply to the tune of $215,000 but in the fact of the win. Olazábal, aged 32, no longer plays for the money. He wants to win more majors, and claiming victory in a tournament that boasted such a strong field illustrates that he can still operate with the best.

Three weeks after his comeback last year he won a European Tour event in the Canaries which, he said on Sunday, "was very special to me". He went on, though: "Other than that tournament, and taking into account who was playing this week, this is my best achievement since 1994." It was in that year that he secured his only major so far, the US Masters.

On a day when high winds created a minor desert storm, scoring soared and Olazábal, three behind Robert Karlsson overnight, fashioned a four-under-par 68 for a 19-under total of 269. That was good enough to win by three shots from the Australian, Stephen Allan.

Karlsson, a high-ball hitter, suffered in the conditions and took 75 to be jointly third with Ernie Els, and the next few names, Ian Woosnam (13 under), and Greg Norman, Lee Westwood and Ignacio Garrido (12 under) reflected the strength of the field.

"If anyone had said to me on Thursday that I would win this week, I would have sent them to one of those houses," said Olazábal, meaning a lunatic asylum. Although he could consume only fluids all week, his illness concentrated his mind on his golf, and his plan for the final round was simple.

"I did not look at leaderboards or think about winning until I eagled the 13th. Then, when I saw I was in front by one, I thought I might have a chance."

The **Guardian Weekly**

Vol 158, No 11
Week ending March 15, 1998

The Washington Post · Le Monde

West gets tough with Milosevic

Ian Black in London and AP in Pristina

RUSSIA joined the United States, Britain and three other Western countries in backing an arms embargo against Yugoslavia on Monday to punish President Slobodan Milosevic for his crackdown on ethnic Albanians in the Serbian province of Kosovo.

The British Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, chairing the Contact Group set up to handle the Bosnian war, pushed through four immediate measures and a warning that assets abroad of the Yugoslav and Serbian governments would be frozen if repression in the largely Albanian-populated province continues.

In Kosovo's capital, Pristina, 50,000 ethnic Albanians held their biggest demonstration in a decade, while in nearby Srbice many families refused to bury 60 victims of fighting last week whose bodies were returned by the Serbs. They included 14 women and 12 children, according to officials of the moderate League of Kosovo (LDK), the biggest Albanian political party in Kosovo, led by Ibrahim Rugova.

As foreign ministers gathered in London, the spectre of the start of the Yugoslav wars of 1991 hung over the meeting. "It's ethnic cleansing all over again," the US secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, said. "The only kind of pressure President Milosevic understands is the kind that imposes a real price on his unacceptable behaviour."

But despite preparatory work it took hours of intensive talk to agree a modest package.

Mr Cook, Ms Albright and Germany's Klaus Kinkel had to work the telephone to persuade Russia's Yevgeny Primakov — who had stayed in Moscow — to back United Nations consideration of an arms embargo and refusal to supply equipment that could be used for repression or terrorism. The US and the European Union already have an arms embargo.

But Russia would not support denying visas to senior Yugoslav and Serbian officials responsible for repression, or a halt to government export credits financing Serbian privatisation.

All six countries — which also include France and Italy — condemned the "deplorable" actions of Serbian police and the "terrorist actions" of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). They asked Mary Robinson, the former Irish president and now the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, to visit the province.

Mr Cook and Ms Albright pushed for agreement to empower the Hague War Crimes Tribunal to gather information on the Kosovo events.

Ethnic Albanians, meanwhile, said at least 52 people, including women and children, old men and entire families, had died in the second sweep by Serbian police last week.

"The Serb regime has committed an atrocity," said Enver Maloku, spokesman for the ethnic Albanians' Kosovo Information Centre. Some bodies were so badly burned that they could not be identified.

The official death toll from last week's two sweeps of villages west of Pristina included 46 Albanians and six Serb policemen.

Associated Press Television and an AP photographer managed to get into Srbica, which was heavily patrolled by police, and briefly saw a construction yard where dozens of bodies — covered by one long white sheet, with heads and legs protruding — were lined up in two rows.

Police allowed the television crew to film only one body, which they claimed was that of Adem Jashari, the alleged leader of the KLA. But many relatives were refusing to pick up the bodies, demanding autopsies by internationally appointed forensic experts who, the Contact Group said, should be invited in to investigate allegations of extra-judicial killings.

"We demand that President Milosevic now commences a political dialogue with the moderate, peaceful leadership of the Kosovar people in order to find a solution that provides the increased autonomy that the people of Kosovo want, and to which they are entitled," Mr Cook said.

The Contact Group also endorsed a new mission led by the former Spanish prime minister Felipe González, the special representative of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, with a specific mandate to address the situation in Kosovo.

In a move apparently timed to influence events in London, the Serb deputy chief of Kosovo, Veljko Odalevic, announced: "The operation to liquidate the heart of Kosovo terrorism has ended."

Comment, page 12
Washington Post, page 15

An ethnic Albanian refugee in Kosovo tries to comfort her grandson as they hide from Serbian police PHOTO: MLADEN ANTONOV

UN inspectors ready to visit Iraqi palaces

Evelyn Leopold in New York

UNITED NATIONS weapons experts will make their first visits to Iraq's "presidential sites" in about two weeks under a pact with Baghdad, UN officials said on Monday.

They said that the chief weapons inspector, Richard Butler, would go to Baghdad at about the same time as the experts start work. The plan by the UN secretary-general, Kofi Annan, for inspections of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's palaces followed the agreement with Iraq last month to open eight "presidential sites" to UN arms inspectors.

The UN weapons experts will be accompanied by diplomats, acting as what observers have dubbed a "dignity police".

UN officials said the first visits to all eight presidential compounds would be "baseline" surveys to set the groundwork for future inspections of these sites, which Iraq had declared to be off-limits.

The visits would be conducted by inspectors and led by the diplomat Jayantha Dhanapala. Mr Dhanapala will remain in Iraq for the first eight inspections but then return to New York and appoint a deputy for subsequent visits. His report on inspections will be submitted to Mr Butler.

The inspectors, part of the UN Special Commission (Unscom) hunting and accounting for Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, had been prohibited from searching all but one of the presidential sites.

The purpose of the first inspections is to test Iraq's willingness to honour Mr Annan's deal, which averted a United States-led military strike for the time being. But the US and Britain have kept troops, planes and warships in the Gulf in case the accord falls apart. — *Reuters*

Austria	AS30	Malta	50c
Belgium	BF80	Netherlands	G 6
Denmark	DK17	Norway	NK 16
Finland	FM 10	Portugal	E300
France	FF 14	Saudi Arabia	SR 6.50
Germany	DM 4	Spain	P 300
Greece	DR 500	Sweden	SK 19
Italy	L 3,500	Switzerland	SF 3.80

Water on the Moon – our passport to the planets

Tim Radford

UNITED STATES space scientists last week astonished the world with the discovery of a huge store of frozen water on the Moon. The find by the space agency Nasa opens the way for human settlement of the Earth's nearest neighbour.

It also makes the Moon available as a kind of petrol station on the road towards deeper exploration of space. Water is made of hydrogen and oxygen, the two constituents of the costly rocket fuel that limits the range of existing spacecraft designs.

Dr Alan Binder, chief scientist behind the Lunar Prospector robot spaceprobe which began orbiting the Moon in January, said: "We have the first unquestionable results indicating that there are significant quantities of water at both lunar poles.

"The implications are tremendous. For the first time, we can go to a planetary body and we can fuel up. That fuel can be used to go to Mars and elsewhere in the solar system."

Apollo astronauts mapped 20 per cent of the Moon before Nasa cancelled the programme in 1973. They reported that it was as dry as concrete.

In 1994, however, a tiny experimental military satellite called Clementine flew past the Moon and reported mysterious hints of ice — possibly delivered by crashing comets — trapped in the cold dark shadows of craters at one of the poles. For the first time in two decades, the Moon mattered again.

The location is vital: most of the Moon is in frozen darkness for 14 Earth days every 28 days. But solar panels at the poles could make electricity at all times.

Nasa scientists picked up a university proposal and fitted out a dustbin-sized spaceprobe packed with sophisticated instruments.

The mission has up to a year to run. But within weeks neutron detectors had "counted" up to 300 million tonnes, surviving as ice in the top metres of lunar soil.

Dr William Feldman, who analysed the neutron spectrometer results, said: "This is a significant resource which will enable a modest amount of colonisation for centuries."

The discovery could start a rush of interest in the exploration and exploitation of what became known during the Apollo programme as the high frontier.

Construction is to begin this year on an $30 billion international orbiting space station. It will take years, an epic number of rocket launches, and hundreds of hours of work in freefall.

US and Japanese engineers have planned lunar factories and lunar hotels. Even European scientists have had their eyes on the Moon as a permanent base. But until now the limiting factor has always been water.

The young are not more selfish, just more in debt

THE much-publicised fact that Britain's Voluntary Service Overseas has experienced a fall in numbers of volunteers says little about either young people or their attitudes (VSO fights shortage of recruits, March 8). VSO takes no volunteers younger than 23 and demands professional skills and experience. As a result, the young people in a position to volunteer cannot do so with VSO, even if they wish to. Yet this one statement from VSO has been taken as proof that a new generation has undergone a fundamental shift in attitudes from enlightened altruism to selfishness.

Pressures of time and money are surely greater than they once were. There is, for example, little prospect of survival on state benefits, even if there is entitlement to them. Student finances are ever tighter, and with no serious prospect of a state pension in 40 years' time, even the young must invest their resources. Full-time volunteering in the UK is a daunting prospect to those of us who have considered it. In the case of voluntary work abroad, charities — rightly — give manual work in developing countries to local people.

Maybe the best explanation is that the ageing sixties generation, conscious of their failure to live up to the naive ideals of their own youth, are reacting by turning their guilt to blame, and passing it on to their children.
Andrew Jackson,
Chester, Cheshire

AS A volunteer working in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, I was surprised by the VSO accusation of selfishness. The realities of being a volunteer here are living off an allowance of $170 per month in what is, as Time magazine recently reported, the most expensive city in Africa and the 19th most expensive in the world.

Imported goods are at least twice the British price. I live in a house with no running water and one fan paid for by VSO. I receive excellent medical care but no dental care, which is unaffordable on my allowance. VSO have decided that we are no longer entitled to use refrigerators; recently the temperature reached 40C with 100 per cent humidity.

I have chosen to be a volunteer and have found the experience personally rewarding. I don't, however, think it selfish for people in Britain not to wish to live in similar conditions.
Piers Vimpany,
Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania

THE challenge for many development agencies is how to promote host-country staff, who make up the largest part of their workforce. None the less, interest in working for an international aid agency remains higher in Britain than the article suggests.

A survey of 116 British aid agencies by International Health Exchange and People In Aid found that 2,600 expatriate staff were recruited in 1996-97. Yet the group of agencies surveyed received 3,000 job inquiries a week. The expansion of university courses in development and humanitarian assistance is further testimony of interest and commitment from a generation that our research suggests is no more "selfish" than its predecessors.

But graduates now begin working life with loans to repay. The level of debt in the student population, not the size of bonuses in the City, is a more realistic indicator of the problem recruiters face.
Sara Davidson,
People In Aid, London

THE decline in VSO recruitment is merely a symptom of a greater malaise in Britain: failure to admit and accept responsibility for its colonial past. This is my feeling after teaching in South Africa's townships for nine years.

In the case of South Africa, Britain's failure should be addressed at government level: with an apology from Tony Blair for colonial oppression in that country and with massive development aid given on a scale not considered before.
Charles Landon,
Illerberg, Germany

Taxing questions

IN COMPARING European and United States tax rates it is important to bear in mind that, in the US, medical costs are generally not covered by the government and are not included in tax rates (Continental drift may undermine EU vision, February 22). The same goes for college tuition. These costs must be paid: it's only a matter of how the burden is shared out. In the US, health insurance is a payroll deduction but not a tax.

Once these costs are factored in, it can be seen that Europe and the US are much nearer to parity and the European model is arguably fairer and less stress-inducing. To assume, as Martin Walker seems to do, that Americans have more disposable income is just not correct.

Nor is it true that unemployment is markedly lower here. US unemployment statistics do not count welfare recipients, while European statistics do. Welfare reform may change this, but the point is that the two economies are not so far apart.
Roger Deal,
Columbus, Ohio, USA

WHEN Martin Walker was on holiday from writing the Washington Diary I used to enjoy his pieces written from outside the DC Beltway when he returned. Now that he is writing his new column I have been asking myself what the European Union equivalent of "beyond the beltway" might be. Any ideas?
Ben Lovell,
Wilmington, Delaware, USA

Murdoch is the message

THE decision of HarperCollins not to publish Chris Patten's book, apparently so as not to jeopardise the proprietor's commercial interests in China, should come as no surprise (Authors quit in revolt against Murdoch, March 8). It is consistent with Rupert Murdoch's record over a number of years, and is a stark example of the dangers of media and publishing being concentrated in the hands of a person for whom commercial power and influence override considerations of impartiality and ethics.

National governments seem unwilling or unable to set limits to the extent of such cross-media ownership. I therefore applaud those authors who withdraw from their contracts with HarperCollins, and suggest that we, the buyers and readers of books, should also make it known that we would rather buy our books from publishers with integrity.
Hugh Jones,
Nedlands, Western Australia

I HAVE not at any time, not even by implication, said that I was thinking of leaving HarperCollins. When asked if I was going to leave, I said that when you are very angry it is a bad time to make decisions. I think that Rupert Murdoch has behaved shamefully.
Doris Lessing,
London

THE greatest change for the better that we have seen in Western history has been the acceptance of free speech and criticism as an inviolable right.

With his actions in appeasing the Chinese government, Rupert Murdoch shows his lack of respect for this and betrays his lack of interest in anything except money. That such a man can dominate the British press and be supported by the Government is very worrying for the future of free speech.
Alan Moore,
Norwich, Norfolk

From bad to worse

THAT inveterate United Nations basher Martin Woollacott could not resist castigating the deal brokered with Iraq by Kofi Annan (Middle East in need of tough US approach, February 15). He also, *en passant*, took an unfair swipe at the "emotional wilfulness" of the softies who worry about "the harm inflicted on Iraqis by sanctions, or threatened by American bombs" and upbraided Russia and France for their "patent greed" for trade and oil deals with Iraq (does he imagine that the US ever acts out of anything else but self-interest?).

While I would not quarrel with Woollacott's general diagnosis of the way the West has handled the crisis up to now, he does not suggest how it might best have been resolved.

"This is not to say that an American attack, if it had come or if it still comes, would not have the same or worse results [than the deal]," he writes. If the deal was bad, and bombing bad or worse, what, pray, is the third course of action that Woollacott would have preferred?
Peter Graham,
Mourjou, France

ALAN TRAVIS concludes that since young British voters — aged 18 to 24 — give the strongest backing for a military campaign, and that support appears to decline with age, it follows that those now in their early 20s are far more bellicose than their predecessors (Most Britons back air raids on Iraq, February 15).

On what basis does he draw this conclusion? I suspect those now aged over 65 were more bellicose when they were in their 20s, but having seen how futile military action has proven to be over the last 40 years have simply lost interest.
Anthony Maye,
Rixensart, Belgium

Briefly

MANY readers no doubt were amused, if not bemused, to find George F Will, from his empyrean perch, contending that the United States presidency has only recently been stained by vulgarians (February 15). One wonders where he was hibernating during the double-taking administrations of Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan. That the current emperor is a liar who romps regularly with the palace tarts should not shock anyone who witnessed the systematic deceit and criminal practices of Republican regimes in the seventies and eighties. The name of the game, surely, is diddling the underlings, and Will appears naive indeed supposing that the next office-holder can purify an institution that is intrinsically corrupt.
Robert MacLeod,
Sirdar, BC, Canada

YOUR editorial and obituary of Enoch Powell were aptly phrased (February 15). In 1968, when Powell made that infamous speech, it was the period when people from all political colours could speak with vigour without being marginalised. Many of us who were undergraduate students, including some of the present cabinet, were grieved that racism became respectable. It was a sad day. To read Tony Blair, whom you quote as saying "he was one of the great figures of 20th century", has revived great pain in many of us who were witness to those anguished days in Britain.
Jamil Rashid,
Kingston, Ontario, Canada

IT IS strange that the Countryside Alliance has only arisen since the election of this Labour government (March 8), reminding me of the League of Housewives, which appeared in the fifties during the post-war Labour government, only to disappear when the Conservatives returned to power.
K Tallow,
Wirral, Merseyside

WITH more than £20 million to give away, it seems that Diana did not leave a penny to charity, instead leaving virtually all her estate to members of Britain's wealthiest family. Is this the caring princess?
David Hedley,
Hebden Bridge, Yorkshire

I MUST confess at being surprised at the shocked tone of the article on the advanced fee fraud originating from Nigeria (February 15). Whoever first coined the saying "There's one born every minute" was making a slight underestimation.
Chris Barnett,
Tokyo, Japan

The Guardian Weekly

March 15, 1998 Vol 158 No 11

Annual subscription rates are £49 United Kingdom; £55 Europe inc. Eire, USA and Canada; £63 Rest of World.
Letters to the Editor and other editorial correspondence to: The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ.
Fax: 44-171-242-0985 (UK: 0171-242 0985)
e-mail: weekly@guardian.co.uk
Subscription, change of address and e-mail inquiries to: gwsubs@guardian.co.uk

Israeli generals call for peace

Julian Borger

MORE than 1,500 reserve officers from Israel's army and police force, including some of its most distinguished former generals, last week called on the prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, to abandon his policy of expanding Jewish settlements in Palestinian areas and choose peace instead.

Their letter — a near-copy of a historic letter sent by retired officers two decades ago which launched the Peace Now movement — said Israeli rule over 2.5 million Palestinians "might harm the Jewish democratic character and make it difficult for us to identify with the path the Israeli state is following".

The letter was signed by the cream of the country's security establishment from the past decade, including a former army chief of staff, Tsvi Tsur, a former police inspector-general, Yosef Nahmias, and 11 retired major-generals.

Israeli-Palestinian peace talks collapsed a year ago after Mr Netanyahu's decision to launch a Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem, which Israel captured in the 1967 Middle East war along with the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The petition focused on Mr Netanyahu's policy of giving political and financial support for the expansion of Jewish settlements on Palestinian territory behind the "Green Line" pre-1967 border. Palestinians fear that the annexation of land by settlements in the West Bank and Gaza is designed to undermine their claims to a national homeland.

"A government that prefers maintaining settlements beyond the Green Line to solving the historic conflict and establishing normal relations in our region will cause us to question the righteousness of our path," the letter said.

Meanwhile Israelis and Palestinians found themselves in unaccustomed agreement about the prospects for a newly launched Middle East peace initiative by the British Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook. Spokesmen for both sides said it was unlikely to have any impact.

The Israeli government said that Europe was too one-sided to act as mediator, while Palestinians argued that any European-led intervention would have no clout without the threat of economic sanctions.

Marwan Kanafani, a spokesman for the Palestinian Authority president, Yasser Arafat, welcomed the call for a halt in the construction of Jewish settlements and a significant Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank in return for a "100 per cent" Palestinian effort against terrorism.

But he added: "It would be good if the words of Mr Cook were backed up by the weight of Europe. If the Europeans use their economic influence on Israel it can be very effective."

Mr Netanyahu's spokesman, David Bar-Illan said: "Our reaction is the same as it's always been — that the European approach is so pro-Palestinian and one-sided that it's very difficult to imagine them acting as a mediator. That role can only be taken by the US at this time."

CIA trains Arafat's spies

Tim Weiner in Washington

THE CIA has been training the security forces of the Palestinian Authority in the arts of espionage, information-gathering, interrogation and other security techniques, according to United States government officials.

With Israel's knowledge, CIA counter-terrorism and covert operations officers have been instructing senior and middle-ranking Palestinian security officials in the US since mid-1996, the officials said. FBI agents who work at the CIA's Counter-terrorist Centre have helped with training.

The programme has two aims, the officials said. The first is to improve the Palestinian security forces' professionalism and ability to identify and arrest suspected terrorists. The second is to increase Israeli government confidence in the Palestinians.

The CIA teaches its trainees non-violent interrogation techniques; its lessons prohibit torture. The Palestinian security services have "commonly" tortured detainees, killing many of the 14 people who have died in their custody in the past three years, according to Human Rights Watch.

The training takes place within a broader programme of co-operation between the CIA, the Palestinian security services and Israel's internal security force, Shin Bet. The CIA station chief in Israel has been the referee under the agreement, which seeks to combat terrorism by militant Islamic groups such as Hamas and, ultimately, to strengthen the frayed regional peace effort.

George Tenet, the director of central intelligence, helped to make the agreement in 1996 when he was deputy director. — *New York Times*



Gender agenda . . . A mother protects her child as they are surrounded by riot police at an International Women's Day protest in Istanbul. Women across the world defied threats, abuse and religious tradition to issue an array of demands PHOTOGRAPH: MUKAD BEZER

China moves to limit regional meltdown

Andrew Higgins in Beijing

THE Chinese prime minister, Li Peng, outlined plans last week to slash the bloated bureaucracy, reinvigorate state industry and push other reforms that will make millions redundant in the hope of preventing the economy succumbing to the financial turmoil sweeping Asia.

The commitment to further market-orientated change came on the opening day of the National People's Congress, the largely impotent body that meets once a year to endorse policy and personnel changes decided by the Communist Party.

Mr Li said China must learn from the wreckage that has buried the economic hopes of China's neighbours, and "advance confidently towards the 21st century".

The speech in the Great Hall of the People was his swan-song as prime minister, a post he has held for 10 years. He will be replaced by Zhu Rongji, a politburo member and former mayor of Shanghai. His address ranged from economic strategy to a call for more chain stores. But there was no reference to political reform.

Though despised for his role in the Tiananmen Square massacre, Mr Li will stay at the summit of power, moving to a new post as chairman of the People's Congress.

Comment, page 12

Hindu alliance set to lead India

Suzanne Goldenberg in New Delhi

INDIA hoped for a reprieve from political chaos this week as the president, K R Narayanan, was expected to ask a coalition led by a Hindu nationalist party to try to form a government.

As the last obstacles to the rise of the Bharatiya Janata party and its alliance vanished last weekend when its opponents virtually admitted defeat, concerns about the intentions of India's first avowedly Hindu government for 50 years were aired.

The BJP, and a bizarre assortment of regional barons, socialists, Hindu extremists and mavericks, won 251 seats in the recent general election, 21 short of an outright majority.

India's traditional rulers, the Congress party, and its allies captured 166, and the regional and leftwing alliance of the outgoing United Front government won 96.

Although the Congress brought about the fall of the United Front government last November, the two blocs threatened to join forces to block the BJP. But the United Front's resolve wavered.

Last weekend the BJP elected an elder statesman, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, as its prime ministerial candidate.

On Monday the political spotlight switched to Sonia Gandhi, as Sitaram Kesri, the Congress president, announced his resignation and begged the Italian-born widow of Rajiv Gandhi to take control of the 113-year-old organisation.

But J Jayalalitha, the other charismatic woman politician to have occupied centre stage since the elections, said it would be "the greatest tragedy" that could befall India.

Ms Jayalalitha's Tamil regional party has emerged as the king-maker in the BJP alliance. Together with her allies she has 30 parliamentary seats.

The Week

RUSSIA is to press ahead with work on building a $860 million nuclear power plant in Iran, as its smaller neighbour Ukraine bowed to pressure from the US to turn its back on the project. Russian firms had been looking to Ukraine's state-owned AOA Turboatom plant to design and build the turbines.

THE government of Zimbabwe has given in to international pressure by softening its controversial programme to seize white-owned farms for landless blacks without paying for the land, a UN report said.

ERICH PRIEBKE, a former [illegible]tenced to life in jail for his role in the 1944 massacre of 335 men and boys at the Ardeatine Caves near Rome, vowed to take his case to the European Court of Human Rights.

AN AVALANCHE hit a village in the Salang area of Afghanistan, killing at least 70 people. Rescue workers have retrieved 70 bodies from the area at the foot of the Hindu Kush, 100km north of the capital, Kabul.

AT LEAST 32 people were killed in the Sri Lankan capital, Colombo, when a suicide bomber blew up a minibus in front of a police station near the city centre.

EZER WEIZMAN, Israel's president, won a second term in a parliamentary vote, easily beating Shaul Amor, a challenger backed by the prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu.
Washington Post, page 15

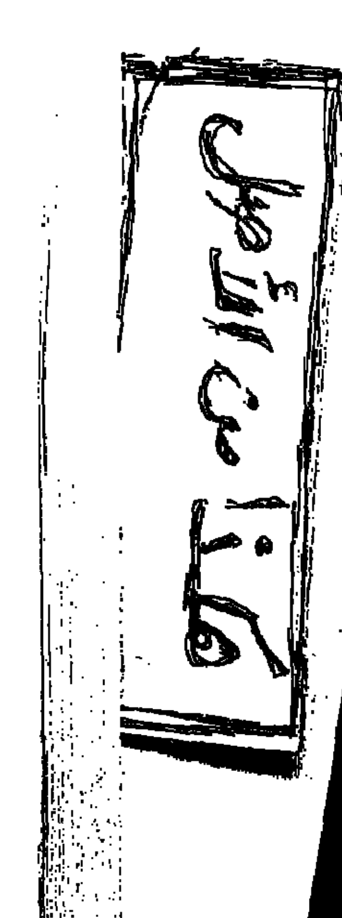
THE presidential candidate of Paraguay's ruling Colorado party, retired general Lino Oviedo, has been jailed for 10 years by a military tribunal for a failed coup attempt in 1996.

PRESIDENT Ernesto Samper's ruling Liberal party won congressional elections in Colombia. But the poll, held amid rebel attacks in which at least 19 people were killed, was marred by abstention.
Washington Post, page 16

THREE survivors of the Dionne quintuplets, who were turned into tourist attractions by the Ontario government in Canada, are to be paid $4 million in compensation.

NIGERIA'S Catholic bishops urged General Sani Abacha to free the country's political prisoners and make amends to opposition groups before a Papal visit this month.

THE Capeman, a show by US singer-songwriter Paul Simon, is to close in New York. An estimated loss of $11 million makes it the most expensive flop musical in Broadway's history.



Indonesia's élite spits defiance

John Aglionby and AP in Jakarta

THOUSANDS of students chanting their rejection of President Suharto demonstrated across Indonesia on Monday as the financial markets gave a huge vote of no confidence in the world's fourth most populous country, at one point wiping 20 per cent off the value of the rupiah.

A Jakarta-based international banker said he was warning clients that the situation was teetering on the brink of economic, political and social anarchy.

[illegible] nomic meltdown if reforms demanded by the International Monetary Fund were rejected, President Suharto and Indonesia's ruling élite gave no indication that they were willing to meet the conditions for the disbursement of the fund's $40 billion rescue plan.

Instead, Suharto had himself formally nominated as the sole candidate in this week's mockery of a presidential election. The ageing peasant-turned-president personally appointed most of the 1,000 assembly members who choose Indonesia's new president.

At the same time, the rhetoric emanating from the president's powerful family and other members of the élite became increasingly nationalistic.

Meanwhile thousands of students from the University of Indonesia in Jakarta gathered outside the building housing the country's highest sovereign body, the People's Consultative Assembly, demanding that delegates refuse to re-elect Mr Suharto for what would be his seventh five-year term as a virtual dictator.

They also demanded an end to the economic crisis which has seen prices rise by as much as 400 per cent, left the rupiah worth less than a quarter of its value of a year ago, caused 90 per cent of Indonesian companies to become technically bankrupt and left tens of millions of people out of work.

A student leader in Jakarta, identified as Achmad, said: "We not only reject President Suharto's account of his last five years in power, we also reject his candidacy for president for the next five years."

Student demonstrations were also held in the cities of Bandung, Surabaya and Semarang on Java, and Ujungpandang on Sulawesi, where 3,000 marched through the city to the provincial legislature demanding political reform and an adequate supply of essentials.

Most demonstrations ended peacefully, but police made several arrests after they broke up a protest by about 20 people against rising prices outside a shopping centre in central Jakarta. Officials would not confirm how many were held.

Four of President Suharto's six children, all of whom have amassed huge personal fortunes during his presidency, defended their father's decision to backtrack on the reforms he agreed earlier with the IMF.

His second daughter, Siti Hediati Prabowo, said: "We do need the IMF, yes, but not if we are continually being repressed with this-and-that conditions." Her brother, Bambang Trihatmodjo, asked: "Why should we keep being dictated to by foreign parties?"

Anthony Davies, the president and director of PT Merrill Lynch Indonesia, said it was now apparent the country's depression was much deeper than the government admitted. He predicted the economy would contract by 7 per cent this year instead of remaining at standstill as President Suharto predicted in his January budget.

"Thirty years of development have been wiped out in six months of chaos," he said. It would take Indonesia between six months and two years to begin reversing the negative trend in its economy.

Meanwhile in Darwin, northern Australia, pro-independence activists from the disputed territory of East Timor burned an effigy of President Suharto outside Jakarta's consulate. Indonesia invaded the former Portuguese colony in 1975 and annexed it a year later.

Comment, page 12



General's death stains Cambodian politics

Nick Cumming-Bruce in Phnom Penh

THACH Kim Sang's assassins waited for him in a café last week, patiently sipping pre-paid drinks, one watching a video, the other the street outside. As their target edged his blue pick-up from a side road into the early morning traffic, they sauntered outside.

One cocked his automatic rifle, the other started up a motorcycle. They caught up with him near the top of the street, fired several shots that killed him instantly, and motored away.

Just one more murder in a country all too familiar with politically motivated killings perhaps, but those shots seem likely to to reverberate beyond Cambodia's borders.

Kim Sang's loyalty to Cambodia's deposed first prime minister, Prince Norodom Ranariddh, does not prove he was murdered on the orders of the second prime minister, Hun Sen, or his henchmen. Nor do the olive-green police uniforms worn by the killers. And a government spokesman has dismissed the idea as "nonsense". Hun Sen was too busy tending his sick mother to have the time or interest for such acts, he explained.

But it will take more than this lame riposte to shake the suspicion that Hun Sen's men have taken another enemy scalp. The killing will deepen the concern of European and other governments thinking of spending millions of dollars on an election that Hun Sen may be determined to win with bullets if not ballots.

"You get a very uneasy feeling," a senior European diplomat admitted.

Cambodian and foreign analysts believe circumstantial evidence points to Hun Sen's security apparatus.

General Kim Sang was not merely a Ranariddh loyalist. He had a long history in the royalist resistance to Hun Sen's former Communist government and was close to Prince Ranariddh's military commander, General Nhek Bunchhay. These connections put him in a group that has been under serious threat since Hun Sen overthrew Prince Ranariddh last July.

Forty-one members of the group were captured and summarily executed during the coup. Persistent reports of a massacre of royalist soldiers south of Phnom Penh suggest that many more died.

Investigators are looking into another 50 murders, suspicious deaths and disappearances in the past six months. All but one case involved officials and supporters of Prince Ranariddh's party, Funcinpec.

"[The killers] are continuing the work they started in July," a human rights watcher said. "They have a list of senior Funcinpec officials in the military, police or administration and they are going after them, one after the other."

"The killings are not only continuing. They are increasing," an analyst in Phnom Penh said.

Auckland asked to turn out the lights

Christopher Zinn in Sydney

AFTER an appeal to God to deliver them from darkness, the people of Auckland, hit by the collapse of the city's power supply last month, have been advised by their electricity company to take extra-long lunches.

Mercury Energy wants office workers in New Zealand's largest city to turn out the lights, leave their workplace and indulge themselves in two-and-a-half-hour lunch breaks.

The beleaguered utility appealed in full-page newspaper advertisements for 60,000 office workers to return to the city centre so cafés, bars and restaurants do not go broke.

But the hundreds of businesses that have been without power since four major cables failed on February 20 have their own scheme to cut their losses. They plan to sue.

An Australian law firm plans to file a class action for more than 400 businesses that have been without power — and customers — since the unprecedented breakdown. More than 120 blocks have been without power or subject to power rationing — coinciding with a heatwave. Last Sunday parishioners of St Patrick's Cathedral offered prayers for help to rectify the crisis.

Mercury Energy announced their "win-win" long-lunch strategy because 40 high-rise office blocks in the business district use 70 per cent of the city centre's power.

But many businesses, which have lost sales worth an estimated $60 million, remain sceptical of the plan because they are already saving power. "We've been doing that all along," said Doug McLaren, spokesman for the Retail and Wholesale Merchants' Association.

It will take up to 10 weeks to install a new emergency power cable to the city centre.

Heart of darkness, page 19

Pinochet to gain immunity

Phil Gunson

GENERAL Augusto Pinochet — the military dictator who closed down Chile's parliament, had thousands of political opponents tortured and murdered, and sent tens of thousands more into exile — was expected to be sworn in as senator-for-life this week under the terms of a constitution he designed himself.

His move faces growing opposition in parliament, in the courts and on the streets of Santiago, but the army's top generals — including the 82-year-old Gen Pinochet's designated successor as army commander-in-chief — have sworn their eternal loyalty to him.

Before becoming a senator, Gen Pinochet was expected to hand over to General Ricardo Izurieta the command that was entrusted to him 25 years ago by the then president, Salvador Allende. Allende was overthrown by Gen Pinochet in a bloody military coup three weeks later.

But Gen Pinochet, the army announced, will henceforth be known as its honorary commander-in-chief — an unprecedented title with no basis in law, but one which, the generals have declared, means any attack on Gen Pinochet is an offence to the army as an institution.

"This is not only illegal, it lacks any morality," said Tomas Moulian, a political analyst. "It is a political act by the generals to silence all mention of the terrorist crimes that took place during the military dictatorship."

Gen Pinochet is threatened with prosecution in several different cases currently before the courts, including one brought by relatives of more than 1,000 disappeared prisoners.

He is also being tried in absentia in Spain for crimes including state terrorism and genocide.

As a senator he will enjoy parliamentary immunity for life, and his swearing-in has been brought forward to reduce to a minimum the opportunity to bring him to justice.

Le Monde, page 13

Radical policies derail Greens' push for power

ATTEMPTS by the leaders of Europe's strongest environmentalist movement, the German Greens, to move into the mainstream and prove themselves fit for government were hampered last weekend when the party adopted radical pacifist and taxation policies, *writes Ian Traynor in Bonn.*

Meeting in the eastern city of Magdeburg to adopt a manifesto for the general election in September, a special congress called for the price of petrol to be tripled over 10 years and for further eco-taxes, and opposed German military involvement in international peacekeeping missions.

The policies were a slap in the face for the Greens' pragmatic and ambitious leaders, and will complicate their search for a deal with the opposition Social Democrats if the SPD emerges as the strongest party in September and unseats Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

The party's de facto leader, Joschka Fischer, has been touted as a possible foreign minister in a "Red-Green" coalition of Social Democrats and environmentalists. But the vote against peacekeeping missions pulled the rug from under his feet. The defence minister, Volker Rühe, said the Greens had been shown to be "irresponsible foreign policy chancers".

Moscow's eastern view of the world

COMMENT
James Meek

THE use of force was revolting, said the Russian foreign minister, Yevgeny Primakov. There had been a "glaring violation of elementary human rights".

The prime minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, was also outraged. "Our people shuddered at what happened. It's impermissible that human rights should be violated like this at the end of the 20th century."

The death of dozens of people in Kosovo was far from their thoughts. The conflict that so perturbed Russia's ruling élite was one the rest of the world barely noticed: the breaking up by Latvian police of a protest meeting of about 2,000 elderly ethnic Russians in the capital, Riga.

Relations were further strained by a complaint from Moscow that vandals had desecrated the tomb of Soviet soldiers — mostly Russians, presumably — who had died in Latvia in the second world war fighting the Nazis. The foreign ministry said the incident had the "obvious" sanction of the Latvian government.

These were further signs of what became clear during the latest Iraqi crisis: the world-views of Moscow and Washington are on increasingly divergent paths and the breakdown of the fragile post-1991 security consensus is a question of when, not if.

Hours after a Russian foreign ministry official denounced Western threats to renew sanctions against Belgrade as unacceptable, President Boris Yeltsin's senior foreign policy adviser, Sergei Yastrzhembsky, said Moscow was considering the unprecedented step of unilateral sanctions against Latvia.

While there is sympathy in the West for Moscow's complaint that the many ethnic Russians in Latvia are denied civil rights, the threat of sanctions will disconcert Europe and the United States. No injured were reported in the Riga demonstration, which was a protest at high utility bills, not racial discrimination.

The row, last week prompted the kind of solidarity Moscow showed in respect of Iraq. Gone are the days when a pro-Western foreign ministry and presidency ignored Russia's nationalist parliament.

Western Europe and the US look like facing the same Russian unanimity on the latest Yugoslav crisis. The chance of keeping Moscow behind sanctions, let alone military action, is slim.

As with Iraq, Russia's interest in having Yugoslavia left alone is more commercial than sentimental or anti-Western.

Russia's emergent foreign policy is a kind of crooked homage to the US. The buzz words of Moscow's armchair geopoliticians — national interest, vital economic interests, spheres of influence — are all lifted from US policyspeak.

That makes it no easier for diplomats trying to keep any one of the many points of tension with Russia from leading to the first serious breakdown in relations since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Satisfaction at Mr Primakov's endorsement of limited Nato expansion and the cooling of the Iraqi crisis is already fading as Kosovo and the Baltic states' desire to join Nato loom.

Moscow remains heavily dependent on Western loans to fund its arduous slog towards a functioning market economy. If the West ever got to the point of threatening to cut that money off, it would mean the post-cold-war consensus had already broken down.

Lithuania confronts its Nazi past

James Meek in Moscow

MORE than half a century after the Nazis swept through the ghettos of Lithuania, murdering all but 11,000 of the country's 220,000 Jews, a court met last week to set a trial date for a former police chief accused of being one of the most willing bureaucrats of the slaughter.

Aleksandras Lileikis, aged 91, headed the puppet security police of Vilnius, the capital of Nazi-occupied Lithuania, during the second world war. He allegedly signed the death warrants of thousands of Jews. Mr Lileikis denies any involvement.

The trial, expected to begin in the next few weeks, will be the first of an alleged war criminal in any former Soviet country. It comes in response to accusations by Israel and the United States that Lithuania has been reluctant to face up to its past.

Mr Lileikis emigrated to the US after the war but returned to Lithuania in 1996 after a court, which had seen Nazi documents relating to his wartime role, stripped him of his US citizenship. The court was shown warrants, signed by Mr Lileikis, condemning Jews to execution in the village of Panerlai, near Vilnius. One was for a six-year-old girl and her mother.

In his defence, Mr Lileikis told the US judge, Richard Stearns, that he had been "a disembodied issuer of orders", but the judge found that tens of thousands of Jews had died under his command.

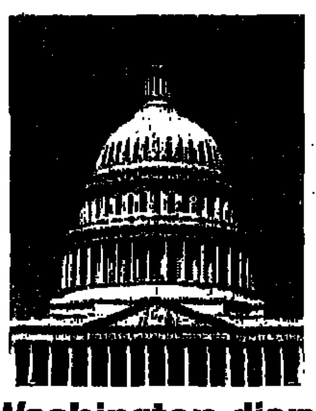
Yet it has taken heavy pressure from Israel, Washington and Jewish organisations to persuade Lithuania to act against Mr Lileikis and other suspected war criminals.

Less than a year ago prosecutors in Vilnius appeared likely to drop the case because of Mr Lileikis's poor health, despite warnings from the White House that if Lithuania wanted to join Western organisations such as Nato it would have to face past crimes squarely. But last December the Lithuanian parliament cleared the main obstacle to prosecuting Mr Lileikis, amending the criminal code to allow suspects accused of genocide to be tried even if too ill to come to court.

Prosecutors recently announced they were pressing charges against a second suspected war criminal, Mr Lileikis's former deputy, Kazys Gimzauskas, aged 89. He had also settled in the US after the war, but lost his citizenship in 1996.



Starr sets up Slick Willie for a sting



Washington diary

Martin Kettle

WATCHING OUT for facts amid the ceaseless torrent of words that continue to be published every day about the Clinton-Lewinsky affair is a bit like being a 49er panning for the glint of gold in a stream that is mostly full of dirt and slurry.

After the initial excitement it has become a painstaking, and even boring, daily chore to sift through the stream of words, but the task is far from hopeless. Just as the Gold Rush miners knew that there was gold in the hills if only they could find it, so we commentators know that there are facts in the articles and interviews if one is alert enough to spot them.

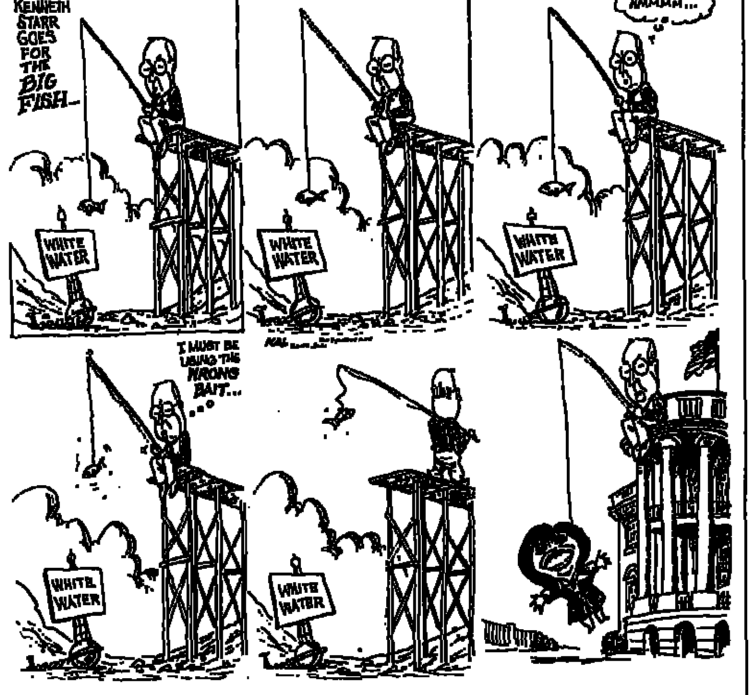
Last week, the Washington Post seemed to have struck a rich seam of new glitter when someone — and one would part with serious money to know the identity of this leaker — passed them a detailed and apparently reliable account of what increasingly appears to be the pivotal phase in the Clinton-Lewinsky crisis. This, it is now becoming clear, was the 24 hours that began on Friday January 16 — when Linda Tripp taped a conversation with Monica Lewinsky in the Ritz Carlton Hotel in Arlington, Virginia — and ended with the return to the White House the following day of a shocked Bill Clinton after his five-hour deposition hearing with Paula Jones's lawyers.

The Washington Post's scoop gave an immensely detailed account of the Clinton deposition, revealing much that had previously only been rumoured about the questioning to which he was subjected, and about the answers that Clinton gave under oath. Note those words "under oath", because if the Post's account is correct — and the response of the White House and Clinton's lawyers made clear that it is — those answers now represent a series of fixed points with which all Clinton's statements, past, present and future, must be reconciled.

Amid so much rich material, however, one particular claim caught the eye. I quote it in full, exactly as published in the Post's account:

"On Friday, January 16, the day before the deposition, Tripp lured Lewinsky to an Arlington hotel so that Starr's investigators could confront her. As the prosecutors questioned Lewinsky, Tripp left the hotel and went to her Maryland home, where she met that evening with a Jones lawyer".

If this claim is true — and it is still only a claim — it would not only provide a missing link to much of what has been happening over the past frenzied weeks, but also tell us a great deal about the prosecution methods of the independent counsel Kenneth Starr, whose role has been the object of such extravagant criticism as the crisis has eddied into a variety of side channels over recent days.



The importance of this version of events is that it would link the Starr investigation to the Jones case. What it says is that Tripp, who twice in that week had secretly recorded conversations with Lewinsky in which, it is said, she led the former intern through the whole story of her relationship with Clinton and his friend Vernon Jordan, then met the Jones team on the night before the crucial Clinton deposition. At that meeting, we may reasonably suppose that Tripp gave the Jones team a detailed version of what Lewinsky had been saying. And it is hard to believe that the meeting at Tripp's house did not take place without the knowledge, and presumably also the encouragement, of Starr.

Certainly by the time that Clinton arrived in the office of his lawyer Bob Bennett for the deposition the following morning, the Jones team was thoroughly briefed about Lewinsky. The deposition began at 10am, and when it broke for lunch two or three hours later, says the Post, the Jones team had still not asked a single question about their own client's case. All the questioning had been about Lewinsky and about five other women who the Jones lawyers wanted to link sexually to Clinton as part of their effort to establish a pattern of harassment that would boost Jones's action.

The Post's account says that Clinton was surprised by the detail of the questioning to which he was subjected. Well he might have been. For he was the victim of a sting operation. From the Jones team's point of view the Lewinsky material was manna from heaven, helping to revive their flagging action against the president. But from Starr's point of view, the deposition was a unique opportunity to try to entrap Clinton into inconsistencies that were potentially material for perjury charges.

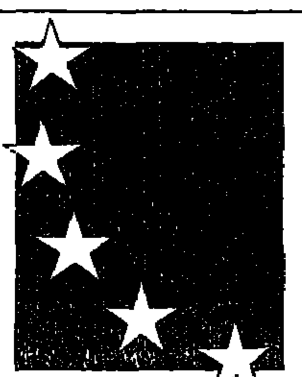
No wonder Clinton was taken aback. No wonder there were what the Post, presumably paraphrasing the leaker, called "moments of pique". No wonder also that when Clinton finally returned to the White House that night, he immediately closeted himself with aides and advisers, calling his secretary Betty Currie to get her to come to the White House the next morning so that they could discuss their versions of events.

When people talk, as Hillary Clinton did a few days later, of a vast rightwing conspiracy against the Clinton White House, they may or may not be exaggerating. When a White House aide such as Sidney Blumenthal alleges, as he did last week, that Starr is engaged in "one of the most bizarre cases of prosecutorial abuse and misconduct in our nation's history", he may feed the impression that the independent counsel is a politically driven guided missile.

Both of these allegations may in the end turn out to be true. Or they may not. But the Washington Post's version of the events of January 16-17 casts little new light on these sweeping claims. On these matters, as Jordan said as he emerged from his two days of evidence before Starr's grand jury last week, "We will see what time will tell us".

What the Post's account does do, however, is illuminate a series of actions and collusions between the lawyers and investigators in Starr's office and the Jones camp, which constitute a much more specific plot. Whether it was rightwing conspiracy or merely a legally, ethically and politically misjudged series of actions will also emerge in due course. But it was a none the less chilling for being so focused.

Beware of the EU bearing gifts



Europe this week

Martin Walker

WHEN THE president of the United States wants to make a forceful point, aircraft carriers start to move. When the European Union wants to assert itself, it offers a trade deal. This may be a more civilised way of doing things. But the EU is going to have to learn that its diplomacy by trade pact is subject to exactly the same rules as the aircraft carriers. They must be the expression of a coherent political will.

The EU last week offered two juicy trade deals, one to the US and the other to Turkey. Neither one is what it seems, because neither had the backing of all 15 member states. Sir Leon Brittan, the EU trade commissioner, offered "A New Transatlantic Marketplace" to the US without taking the elementary precaution of ensuring that the entire European Commission, let alone the member states in the Council of Ministers, was in full support of it. Both French commissioners were opposed.

At least the full Commission endorsed the offer to Turkey, hoping to avoid a complete breakdown in relations with a thinly veiled appeal to the other member states to pressure Greece into lifting its blockade of the $430 million already promised to Turkey under the long-agreed customs union.

But with the grim inevitability of a Greek tragedy, a serious crisis is approaching. The EU is scheduled to open accession negotiations with Cyprus on March 31, a move that Turkey says will force it to respond by strengthening its own links to Turkish-occupied northern Cyprus. This could mean permanent partition, and in practical terms make it impossible for the EU to absorb a part or the whole of a divided island.

Europe's carrot was the formal offer to Turkey of a status very close to EU membership. It would include a strengthened customs union, with virtual free trade in services and farm produce, a range of co-operative ventures in everything from industrial policy to telecommunications, and participation in EU programmes. But this rings hollow while Greece blocks the customs union funds, and while Athens and Ankara both play at brinkmanship over Cyprus.

"The EU is committed to the process of broadening and deepening our relations with Turkey," the EU's foreign affairs commissioner, Hans van den Broek, said last week. "We need to find solutions in the Council [of Ministers] to the problem of the customs union funds. It is urgent that the Council adopts as soon as possible the financial regulation of the special action concerning Turkey."

Under EU etiquette, the Commission cannot bring itself to call a spade a spade and name Greece as the immediate problem. But lurking behind Greece's objections lie other obstacles. There is Germany's reluctance to say that an accession process is under way that could eventually allow free movement of Turks into Germany, to join the 2 million already there. And there was the provocative remark by the Luxembourg prime minister, Jean-Claude Juncker, at the Luxembourg summit last December when he hosted the EU summit, that he did not care "to sit at the same Euro-table as Turkish torturers".

As well as the "new European strategy" for Turkey, the Commission also approved last week the text of the second annual report to the European parliament on relations with Turkey. A factual rather than a policy document, this highlighted another of the most vexed issues, Turkey's human rights record.

"In regard to the situation concerning the rights of man and the democratisation process, the commission finds that the programme of the Turkish government has so far had no discernible effect," the report said.

Sir Leon's plan for a new transatlantic marketplace would scrap all remaining tariffs on goods, agree common regulations and liberalise services between the US and the EU, and add $198 billion to US-European trade. The proposal, which has received a preliminary welcome in Washington after long discussions with the Clinton administration and with both sides in the US Congress, is being sold by Sir Leon as a way "to enhance the broader political relationship between the US and the European Union".

Although the scheme contains no explicit reference to the new single currency, it looks to a future dominated by the dollar and the euro, from the two economic systems which between them account for two-thirds of world trade and more than half of the planet's GDP. After several years of fruitless discussions about a Trans-Atlantic Free Trade Area, the marketplace proposal is being launched now because the Asian financial crisis has revealed the limitations of the Clinton administration's early infatuation with the Pacific Rim.

The plan is highly ambitious, with the EU recognising that freedom of services will also require some liberalisation of visa and work permit regimes, so that providers of services will be able to work freely in both the US and Europe.

The key provisions of the scheme envisage:

- A free trade area in services;
- a commitment to end all tariffs on goods by 2010;
- further liberalisation, aiming at a free trade area, of government procurement, intellectual property and investment;
- scrapping of technical and non-tariff barriers to trade through an extensive process of mutual recognition of technical and safety standards and of consumer safeguards.

The plan deliberately excludes the most contentious issues of transatlantic trade — agricultural goods and audio-visual services, the areas on which earlier proposals to forge a US-EU free trade area broke down. But this was not enough to mollify the suspicious French, who muttered that this was a doomed "Titanic project". They claim that World Trade Organisation rules would, in effect, require Europe to offer the same free access to all other WTO members, with scant chance of imposing social, environmental or competition rules.

Sir Leon may squeeze the plan past the Commission this week, but the Council of Ministers lies in wait. It would be unwise, therefore, to assume that either of the EU's grandiose trade deals will come to pass. With policy incoherence such as this, it may be just as well that the EU commands no aircraft carriers.

The Week in Britain James Lewis

Blair's friends in the north stick to socialism

OLD-FASHIONED socialist fervour, largely purged from the New Labour party, still flourishes north of the border, as the Prime Minister discovered to his discomfiture when he went to lecture his troops at the annual conference of the Scottish Labour party in Perth.

Tony Blair warned delegates that they would need to keep their nerve in the months ahead because keeping within a prudent financial path was going to be difficult. Hitting out at the spending demands of leftwing critics, he said that tough actions and hard choices had to be made "because we are in the real world".

The conference listened politely, then passed a number of resolutions critical of Government policy, and another to scrap the Trident missile system, thereby releasing £1.5 billion for housing and education. Delegates were clearly asking why Trident should be protected from the tough questioning being applied to other areas of public spending.

Mr Blair first clashed with his comrades north of the border over his insistence that Scottish self-rule should be subject to a referendum. More recently, the Scots have been angered by the intention of the Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine, to veto plans to legally enshrine "gender balance" in the Edinburgh parliament. Nor are they pleased by Mr Blair's reported scheme to exclude troublesome leftwingers when candidates for that parliament are selected.

In England, Labour's policies are fashioned by the need to beat the Conservatives at the next general election. In Scotland, where Tories are almost an extinct species, the main threat comes from left-leaning nationalists, which explains party members' attachment to pre-Blairite socialist policy relics.

FREEMASONS decided against a confrontation with MPs, and escaped a charge of contempt of Parliament, by reluctantly handing over the names of 16 members who may have been involved in controversial police investigations.

The Commons Home Affairs Select Committee, inquiring into freemasonry in the police and the judiciary, asked the Masons last summer to identify their members from a list of 160 officers involved in investigations such as the Birmingham pub bombings. When the request was refused, the committee issued a formal order, to be complied with within 14 days.

The United Grand Lodge of England waited until the last possible moment before handing over the names. The lodge's Grand Secretary, Commander Michael Higham, said his board was "extremely uncomfortable" about being compelled to comply, and he would be writing to the Prime Minister to express concern about the erosion of "long-established rights of lawful association".

MORE THAN 300 ministers, former ministers and civil servants are expected to give evidence to a public inquiry into the causes of BSE (mad cow disease), the way it was handled by government, and the link between it and a new variant of CJD (Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease), from which around 20 people have died.

The inquiry had been expected to report by the end of the year. But even as it opened, its chairman, Lord Justice Phillips, asked for an extra six months, saying he did not want a report which was superficial because it had been rushed.

There are hopes that the worldwide ban on British beef could be eased this month following a vote by most European states to let Northern Ireland resume exports from herds certified free of BSE. Northern Ireland is the only region that meets the European Union's stringent conditions because it has for more than eight years used a computerised system for tracking its cattle from birth.

GRANADA television publicly apologised to the Marks and Spencer retail group, and agreed to pay an estimated £50,000 damages and more than £600,000 costs, over a programme alleging that the company exploited child labour in a Moroccan factory.

The settlement was reached three days into what could have been a six-week libel trial when the judge, Mr Justice Popplewell, decided to turn the action into a "sudden death" trial, inviting the jury to view the programme and decide what it meant, without hearing any evidence from witnesses — a course that could pave the way for swift settlements in future actions.

The jury decided that the programme did give viewers the impression that M&S had deliberately misled customers by selling garments labelled "Made in the UK" that it knew were made abroad. Granada could supply no evidence that M&S had such knowledge.

THE PUBLISHERS HarperCollins, owned by the media tycoon, Rupert Murdoch, made an abject, "unreserved" apology to Chris Patten, the last governor of Hong Kong, for suggesting that his forthcoming book, East And West, was "too boring" to publish.

HarperCollins's rejection of the manuscript was seen as evidence of Mr Murdoch's media empire kowtowing to Beijing in order to protect his business interests in East Asia. The firm will pay Mr Patten the rest of his advance of £125,000. His book, strongly critical of China, will be published by Macmillan.





Big spending in 'a noble cause'

PARLIAMENTARY SKETCH
Simon Hoggart

LORD IRVINE, appearing before the Commons public administration committee, might have adopted the approach humorous, with a few self-deprecating jokes about the £650,000 redecoration of his apartments at Westminster.

He could have turned up before the public administration committee wearing white overalls, with paint-spattered shoes, and a beat-up radio smeared with putty. They would have loved him. (Nancy Reagan, faced with similar charges of overspending on interior decor and crockery, came to a dinner for White House correspondents in ragged clothes and an old straw hat, singing Second Hand Rose. The issue was dead and buried overnight.)

Instead, he took the approach pompous. He was not merely right when he requested his refurbishments: he was working "in a noble cause" — like extending the franchise or defeating Hitler.

"Future generations will be grateful," he insisted, often.

The Lord Chancellor does not so much answer questions as unroll a speech, like valuable hand-blocked wallpaper. Nothing is ever true, but instead "is the case, across the board, as it were, for all manner of reasons". He never does anything so plebeian as agree with something, but examines himself and declares that "I find myself hospitable to the idea".

He treated the committee like a headmaster inspecting the debating society. "This is a speech, not a question," he announced to one impertinent young MP. He instructed them to pause for his answers. When he was a QC, mere judges probably quailed before his admonitions.

The more he was attacked, the more selfless he appeared, in his own eyes at least. Andrew Tyrie (Conservative, Chichester) wondered if he regretted the long letter he had written to Black Rod, explaining what connoisseurs he and Lady Irvine were, and how perfectly justified it was for fine works of art to be shipped immediately to decorate their quarters. Had the leak of this letter proved embarrassing?

Embarrassed? Perish the thought! A pigeon defecating on his wig; now that might have been embarrassing. "Future generations will agree, and will see this as a storm in a teacup," he vouchsafed. He could be right. Peter Mandelson has probably spent the last month in a sperm bank, conducting a focus group on the views of future generations.

He went on, "I don't think that my apologies are due. I read the commentators who say, 'Three cheers that this work has been done! And three cheers for the committee that chose to make the decision!' "

Suddenly we had a picture of a nation rejoicing at the redecoration. It was like VE Day. There would be school holidays to celebrate the pasting of the last roll on the wall.

The trouble is that even though the Lord Chancellor is more pompous than it is possible to imagine, he may be right. When Pugin did the interior decorations of the Palace he insisted on standards that cost nearly £4 million a year to maintain today. Either you keep it up, or go in for chipboard and Formica. As Lord Irvine put it, "you are not talking about something down at the DIY store".

'Foul play' over passive smoking report

Sarah Boseley

THE tobacco industry was accused by doctors of foul play last week for claiming that an unpublished European study cleared passive smoking of causing cancer.

There was angry reaction to British American Tobacco's allegation that publication of the study was being held up by the World Health Organisation, which had commissioned it, because its conclusions would set back the anti-smoking crusade.

BAT was accused of deliberately drawing wrong conclusions from the European study in the hope of laying a false trail ahead of what may be a damaging report from the Department of Health. A Government review of the evidence, due to be published this week, is likely to conclude passive smoking is a killer.

Malcolm Law, one of the authors of a definitive analysis of the research to date into passive smoking, which was published in the British Medical Journal last October, said the tobacco industry's interpretation of the WHO study was wrong. For the past 10 years studies had clearly shown that those who live with smokers had a 25 per cent increased risk of developing cancer. The European study was no different.

"The authors' own conclusion is that their study is totally consistent with previous work," he said.

The new study, by Rodolfo Saracci, had not been held up by the WHO, he said. It had been submitted to the Journal of the National Cancer Institute in the US. Any delay was caused by the lengthy process of peer review.

The tobacco industry had claimed the WHO study was the largest of its type and that it had found not only that passive smoking does not kill, but that it may even have a protective effect.

Doctors from the British Medical Association retorted that the study of 650 lung cancer patients and 1,542 healthy people was dwarfed by the 4,600 cases that Dr Law reviewed last October.

Bill O'Neill, science research adviser at the BMA, said there were signs that the industry, which has chosen for years to ignore the attacks on it, had decided to become pro-active in the past few weeks.

"They are aware of all the publicity coming this week and they are trying to react to it," he said. The industry had also been dismayed, he believed, by the litigation brought in this country. A class action involving 43 cases of people against the tobacco companies is proceeding towards the courts.

Chris Proctor, head of science at BAT, claimed that the research showed the risk of lung cancer from the environment was so small as to be unquantifiable. "If this study can not find any statistically valid risk you have to ask whether there can be any risk at all."

Gordon McVie, director general of the Cancer Research Campaign, said BAT's interpretation of the report was "highly misleading".

Washington Post, page 15

Straw sets McAliskey free

Owen Bowcott and John Mullin

JACK STRAW on Monday provoked Unionist anger and nationalist delight by halting the extradition of Roisin McAliskey — wanted in Germany over an IRA mortar attack on a British army base two years ago — on the grounds that she was suffering from poor mental health.

The Home Secretary said medical reports meant that extradition would be "unjust and oppressive".

Ms McAliskey, who gave birth to her daughter, Lionnir, while on bail, has been freed after 16 months in detention. But she is to remain in hospital for further medical treatment, said her mother, Bernadette McAliskey, the former MP for Mid-Ulster.

The timing sparked a row in Northern Ireland, with Unionists labelling the move another concession to Sinn Fein ahead of its critical meeting with the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, probably on Thursday. It will decide whether to return to the multi-party talks at Stormont after the Downing Street summit.

Ian Paisley Jr, justice spokesman for the Democratic Unionist Party, said: "I am totally disgusted, but not surprised at this sop to the republican movement."

Ulster Unionist MP Ken Maginnis said: "No one will be surprised if she now makes a miraculous recovery. The decision by the Home Secretary will, unfortunately, put doubt in the minds of the international community about the UK's commitment to extradition of terrorist suspects."

The Irish government, under renewed pressure from Sinn Fein to deliver nationalist demands at Stormont, was delighted. David Andrews, Irish foreign affairs minister, said he had raised Ms McAliskey's situation several times with the Northern Ireland Secretary, Mo Mowlam.

Ms McAliskey, aged 26, was arrested in Northern Ireland in November 1996 after the German authorities identified her as a suspect in the attack on Osnabruck barracks in June 1996. She won bail after she was examined by psychiatrists, provided she stayed at the mother-and-baby unit at the Maudsley hospital in south London.

Under the terms of the extradition agreement, the British courts did not need to be satisfied that there was a case to be answered. Ms McAliskey's lawyers had heavily criticised the identification evidence linking her to the June 1996 attack, in which there were no injuries.

The German government's arrest warrant said the evidence against her relied upon the statement of an eyewitness, who said he saw her at a holiday home in Germany rented by the IRA active service unit, and that her fingerprints were found on a cellophane wrapping.

Her supporters said the eyewitness had retracted his statement on German television. They suggested that the fingerprints could have been found elsewhere and transferred to Germany.

It is believed that Ms McAliskey's mental condition stemmed from her time in Castlereagh holding centre, Belfast, where she was first interviewed. She was later sent to London and held in both Belmarsh and Holloway prison.

● The maverick Loyalist Volunteer Force, thought responsible for the killings in Poyntzpass, Co Armagh, last week of Catholic Damien Trainor and his lifelong Protestant friend, Philip Allen, issued threats this week against Protestants who collude in the peace process. They included churchmen, politicians and the business community.

Body may be exhumed in Woodward appeal

**Joanna Coles
in Boston, Massachusetts**

LAWYERS for Louise Woodward, the British au pair convicted of manslaughter last autumn, on Monday raised the possibility of exhuming the body of nine-month-old Matthew Eappen to try to prove her innocence.

Woodward's defence team also confirmed at a 55-minute appeal hearing in Boston before a panel of seven supreme court judges that they may agree to a new trial.

Andrew Good said crucial medical evidence, including a piece of Matthew's skull, had been thrown away, despite a court order, before the defence could order their own autopsy. He said the medical evidence that pointed to an old injury was not a matter of conjecture but "one of science".

"We could have ended this case before it started had we had the skull fracture," Mr Good said. "If the evidence were clear to support that theory, which it may have been, you get yourself a new trial," the chief justice, Herbert Wilkins, replied.

The judges had pointed questions for the prosecutor, Sabita Singh. Several asked if the prosecution had withheld evidence, to which Ms Singh replied: "It's unclear."

The age of the injury to Matthew's skull is crucial to the understanding of the case because the prosecution has always insisted that Woodward killed Matthew in a fit of pique after slamming his head on a hard surface on February 4, 1997. But the defence claim the injury was at least three weeks old and could have been an accident or caused by someone else.

Woodward was found guilty of second degree murder by a jury last October. But in a surprise decision 10 days later, Judge Hiller Zobel released her after reducing her conviction to one of involuntary manslaughter and altering her 15-year sentence to the 279 days she had already spent in custody.

Both sides are appealing against his decision. The defence wants her conviction overturned. The prosecution wants the original verdict and sentence reinstated and argues that the judge overreached his powers.

Mr Good said: "It's our contention that this case raises a question as to whether a legal judgment in this particular case may flout conclusive, uncontested, scientific evidence."

Ms Singh said the medical evidence was a matter of conjecture and that the jury had rejected the defence's argument and that of medical experts. She argued that Judge Zobel had abused his power by reducing the conviction to manslaughter.

The seven judges have 120 days to decide. They have five options: to reinstate the jury's verdict and original sentence; to uphold Judge Zobel's decision; to call for a retrial; to quash the conviction completely; to uphold Judge Zobel's decision but impose a heavier sentence, which could result in Woodward returning to jail.

Glaxo cuts Aids drug price

GLAXO Wellcome is slashing the price of its Aids treatment, AZT, for pregnant women in developing countries, *writes Lisa Buckingham.*

The company is reducing the cost by up to three-quarters following new trials which show that a small dose can inhibit transmission of the HIV virus by mothers to their newborn babies.

It is the first time one of the big pharmaceuticals groups has reduced the price of an Aids drug in an effort to help those poor countries most affected by the disease. Health officials reckon about 600,000 babies died last year after contracting the HIV virus from their mothers.

Glaxo's initiative comes just a month after SmithKline Beecham said it would invest up to $1 billion in drugs to end elephantiasis in the developing world, where about 120 million people are affected.

Drugs groups have been accused of making gestures to poorer countries only when their costly drugs come out of patent and their earnings value declines dramatically, but AZT still has years to run.

Class action . . . Students on the march in Manchester last week joined more than 2 million undergraduates across the country who walked out of lectures over the Government's plans to introduce £1,000-a-year tuition fees (*Me over we, page 28*) PHOTO: DON McPHEE

Asylum-seekers system an 'utter shambles'

Lucy Patton

THE Chief Inspector of Prisons has described Britain's system for dealing with asylum-seekers as a "complete and utter shambles" after visiting one of Britain's biggest detention centres.

According to a leaked letter, Sir David Ramsbotham condemned the system in a report after he made a surprise visit to Campsfield House in Oxford, where inmates have complained of racism from staff, heavy-handed security, insufficient food and prison-style incarceration.

The report said the centre — run by the Group 4 security firm — was "a complete and utter shambles, not only as far as the immigration policy is concerned but over all areas connected with immigration detainees and asylum-seekers".

It added: "Group 4 have been put in an impossible situation. They do not know what rights and responsibilities they have in dealing with detainees."

A United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees inspector who visited the centre said: "Britain has more people in detention for longer periods of time than any other European country."

About 70,000 asylum-seekers at any one time are waiting to find whether they will be allowed to remain in the UK, of whom about 800 are held in detention. Labour pledged before the last election to reform the system.

The Home Secretary, Jack Straw, announced a review of the whole asylum system after rioting at Campsfield House last year. Sixteen detainees were arrested after the rioting, 13 were charged and nine are in custody awaiting trial. Charges against four others were dropped.

A Home Office spokeswoman said no date had been set for the publication of the chief inspector's report.

In Brief

ALMOST 2,000 images of child pornography have been removed from the Internet in the past year after complaints to the British industry watchdog.

TREVOR REES-JONES, the bodyguard and sole survivor of the crash that killed Diana, Princess of Wales, spoke to the French judge handling the case about his improved recollection, but added little new information.

BRITISH troops in the Gulf have belatedly been offered vaccination against anthrax, the main biological weapon Saddam Hussein is believed to have hidden from United Nations weapons inspectors.

ANDREW ARMSTRONG, an alcoholic who killed three cyclists after being seen at the wheel of his car clutching a bottle of vodka, has been jailed for seven years and banned from driving for 15 years.

THE Seventh Day Adventists have become the first minor Christian denomination to win state funding for a school when the Government said it was satisfied with standards at John Loughborough secondary in Haringey, north London.

AT LEAST one in eight 14- and 15-year-olds will have used an illegal drug in the past month, but the survey by the Schools Health Education Unit also found that fewer children reported having experimented with drugs than in previous years.

THE Government is to legislate to stop men accused of rape cross-examining alleged victims in court after dispensing with the services of lawyers.

SO MANY people detained by police are under the influence of alcohol or drugs that the use of detoxification centres should be considered, the Audit Commission reports. Fifty-four per cent of police surgeon call-outs relate to drugs and alcohol.

PROSTITUTES working in Glasgow are to be issued with personal attack alarms by police following the murder of Margo Lafferty, the seventh killing in the city's red light district in the past six years.

TONY BLAIR has attended mass alone at Westminster Cathedral several times since Christmas, prompting speculation about the extent to which he is drawn to the Roman Catholic faith practised by his wife, Cherie, and their three children.

THE Government has offloaded £1 billion of stude[...] debt to NatWest Bank, which [...] agreed to maintain the exi[...] repayment terms for bor[...] including rates of inte[...] ited to the rate of infl[...]



Indonesia's élite spits defiance

John Aglionby and AP in Jakarta

THOUSANDS of students chanting their rejection of President Suharto demonstrated across Indonesia on Monday as the financial markets gave a huge vote of no confidence in the world's fourth most populous country, at one point wiping 20 per cent off the value of the rupiah.

A Jakarta-based international banker said he was warning clients that the situation was teetering on the brink of economic, political and social anarchy.

... nomic meltdown if reforms demanded by the International Monetary Fund were rejected, President Suharto and Indonesia's ruling élite gave no indication that they were willing to meet the conditions for the disbursement of the fund's $40 billion rescue plan.

Instead, Suharto had himself formally nominated as the sole candidate in this week's mockery of a presidential election. The ageing peasant-turned-president personally appointed most of the 1,000 assembly members who choose Indonesia's new president.

At the same time, the rhetoric emanating from the president's powerful family and other members of the élite became increasingly nationalistic.

Meanwhile thousands of students from the University of Indonesia in Jakarta gathered outside the building housing the country's highest sovereign body, the People's Consultative Assembly, demanding that delegates refuse to re-elect Mr Suharto for what would be his seventh five-year term as a virtual dictator.

They also demanded an end to the economic crisis which has seen prices rise by as much as 400 per cent, left the rupiah worth less than a quarter of its value of a year ago, caused 90 per cent of Indonesian companies to become technically bankrupt and left tens of millions of people out of work.

A student leader in Jakarta, identified as Achmad, said: "We not only reject President Suharto's account of his last five years in power, we also reject his candidacy for president for the next five years."

Student demonstrations were also held in the cities of Bandung, Surabaya and Semarang on Java, and Ujungpandang on Sulawesi, where 3,000 marched through the city to the provincial legislature demanding political reform and an adequate supply of essentials.

Most demonstrations ended peacefully, but police made several arrests after they broke up a protest by about 20 people against rising prices outside a shopping centre in central Jakarta. Officials would not confirm how many were held.

Four of President Suharto's six children, all of whom have amassed huge personal fortunes during his presidency, defended their father's decision to backtrack on the reforms he agreed earlier with the IMF.

His second daughter, Siti Hediati Prabowo, said: "We do need the IMF, yes, but not if we are continually being repressed with this-and-that conditions." Her brother, Bambang Trihatmodjo, asked: "Why should we keep being dictated to by foreign parties?"

Anthony Davies, the president and director of PT Merrill Lynch Indonesia, said it was now apparent the country's depression was much deeper than the government admitted. He predicted the economy would contract by 7 per cent this year instead of remaining at standstill as President Suharto predicted in his January budget.

"Thirty years of development have been wiped out in six months of chaos," he said. It would take Indonesia between six months and two years to begin reversing the negative trend in its economy.

Meanwhile in Darwin, northern Australia, pro-independence activists from the disputed territory of East Timor burned an effigy of President Suharto outside Jakarta's consulate. Indonesia invaded the former Portuguese colony in 1975 and annexed it a year later.

Comment, page 12



General's death stains Cambodian politics

Nick Cumming-Bruce in Phnom Penh

THACH Kim Sang's assassins waited for him in a café last week, patiently sipping pre-paid drinks, one watching a video, the other the street outside. As their target edged his blue pick-up from a side road into the early morning traffic, they sauntered outside.

One cocked his automatic rifle, the other started up a motorcycle. They caught up with him near the top of the street, fired several shots that killed him instantly, and motored away.

Just one more murder in a country all too familiar with politically motivated killings perhaps, but those shots seem likely to to reverberate beyond Cambodia's borders.

Kim Sang's loyalty to Cambodia's deposed first prime minister, Prince Norodom Ranariddh, does not prove he was murdered on the orders of the second prime minister, Hun Sen, or his henchmen. Nor do the olive-green police uniforms worn by the killers. And a government spokesman has dismissed the idea as "nonsense". Hun Sen was too busy tending his sick mother to have the time or interest for such acts, he explained.

But it will take more than this lame riposte to shake the suspicion that Hun Sen's men have taken another enemy scalp. The killing will deepen the concern of European and other governments thinking of spending millions of dollars on an election that Hun Sen may be determined to win with bullets if not ballots.

"You get a very uneasy feeling," a senior European diplomat admitted.

Cambodian and foreign analysts believe circumstantial evidence points to Hun Sen's security apparatus.

General Kim Sang was not merely a Ranariddh loyalist. He had a long history in the royalist resistance to Hun Sen's former Communist government and was close to Prince Ranariddh's military commander, General Nhek Bunchhay. These connections put him in a group that has been under serious threat since Hun Sen overthrew Prince Ranariddh last July.

Forty-one members of the group were captured and summarily executed during the coup. Persistent reports of a massacre of royalist soldiers south of Phnom Penh suggest that many more died.

Investigators are looking into another 50 murders, suspicious deaths and disappearances in the past six months. All but one case involved officials and supporters of Prince Ranariddh's party, Funcinpec.

"[The killers] are continuing the work they started in July," a human rights watcher said. "They have a list of senior Funcinpec officials in the military, police or administration and they are going after them, one after the other."

"The killings are not only continuing. They are increasing," an analyst in Phnom Penh said.

Auckland asked to turn out the lights

Christopher Zinn in Sydney

AFTER an appeal to God to deliver them from darkness, the people of Auckland, hit by the collapse of the city's power supply last month, have been advised by their electricity company to take extra-long lunches.

Mercury Energy wants office workers in New Zealand's largest city to turn out the lights, leave their workplace and indulge themselves in two-and-a-half-hour lunch breaks.

The beleaguered utility appealed in full-page newspaper advertisements for 60,000 office workers to return to the city centre so cafés, bars and restaurants do not go broke.

But the hundreds of businesses that have been without power since four major cables failed on February 20 have their own scheme to cut their losses. They plan to sue.

An Australian law firm plans to file a class action for more than 400 businesses that have been without power — and customers — since the unprecedented breakdown. More than 120 blocks have been without power or subject to power rationing — coinciding with a heatwave. Last Sunday parishioners of St Patrick's Cathedral offered prayers for help to rectify the crisis.

Mercury Energy announced their "win-win" long-lunch strategy because 40 high-rise office blocks in the business district use 70 per cent of the city centre's power.

But many businesses, which have lost sales worth an estimated $60 million, remain sceptical of the plan because they are already saving power. "We've been doing that all along," said Doug McLaren, spokesman for the Retail and Wholesale Merchants' Association.

It will take up to 10 weeks to install a new emergency power cable to the city centre.

Heart of darkness, page 19

Pinochet to gain immunity

Phil Gunson

GENERAL Augusto Pinochet — the military dictator who closed down Chile's parliament, had thousands of political opponents tortured and murdered, and sent tens of thousands more into exile — was expected to be sworn in as senator-for-life this week under the terms of a constitution he designed himself.

His move faces growing opposition in parliament, in the courts and on the streets of Santiago, but the army's top generals — including the 82-year-old Gen Pinochet's designated successor as army commander-in-chief — have sworn their eternal loyalty to him.

Before becoming a senator, Gen Pinochet was expected to hand over to General Ricardo Izurieta the command that was entrusted to him 25 years ago by the then president, Salvador Allende. Allende was overthrown by Gen Pinochet in a bloody military coup three weeks later.

But Gen Pinochet, the army announced, will henceforth be known as its honorary commander-in-chief — an unprecedented title with no basis in law, but one which, the generals have declared, means any attack on Gen Pinochet is an offence to the army as an institution.

"This is not only illegal, it lacks any morality," said Tomas Moulian, a political analyst. "It is a political act by the generals to silence all mention of the terrorist crimes that took place during the military dictatorship."

Gen Pinochet is threatened with prosecution in several different cases currently before the courts, including one brought by relatives of more than 1,000 disappeared prisoners.

He is also being tried in absentia in Spain for crimes including state terrorism and genocide.

As a senator he will enjoy parliamentary immunity for life, and his swearing-in has been brought forward to reduce to a minimum the opportunity to bring him to justice.

Le Monde, page 13

Radical policies derail Greens' push for power

ATTEMPTS by the leaders of Europe's strongest environmentalist movement, the German Greens, to move into the mainstream and prove themselves fit for government were hampered last weekend when the party adopted radical pacifist and taxation policies, *writes Ian Traynor in Bonn.*

Meeting in the eastern city of Magdeburg to adopt a manifesto for the general election in September, a special congress called for the price of petrol to be tripled over 10 years and for further eco-taxes, and opposed German military involvement in international peacekeeping missions.

The policies were a slap in the face for the Greens' pragmatic and ambitious leaders, and will complicate their search for a deal with the opposition Social Democrats if the SPD emerges as the strongest party in September and unseats Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

The party's de facto leader, Joschka Fischer, has been touted as a possible foreign minister in a "Red-Green" coalition of Social Democrats and environmentalists. But the vote against peacekeeping missions pulled the rug from under his feet. The defence minister, Volker Rühe, said the Greens had been shown to be "irresponsible foreign policy chancers".

Moscow's eastern view of the world

COMMENT
James Meek

THE use of force was revolting, said the Russian foreign minister, Yevgeny Primakov. There had been a "glaring violation of elementary human rights".

The prime minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, was also outraged. "Our people shuddered at what happened. It's impermissible that human rights should be violated like this at the end of the 20th century."

The death of dozens of people in Kosovo was far from their thoughts. The conflict that so perturbed Russia's ruling élite was one the rest of the world barely noticed: the breaking up by Latvian police of a protest meeting of about 2,000 elderly ethnic Russians in the capital, Riga.

Relations were further strained by a complaint from Moscow that vandals had desecrated the tomb of Soviet soldiers — mostly Russians, presumably — who had died in Latvia in the second world war fighting the Nazis. The foreign ministry said the incident had the "obvious" sanction of the Latvian government.

These were further signs of what became clear during the latest Iraqi crisis: the world-views of Moscow and Washington are on increasingly divergent paths and the breakdown of the fragile post-1991 security consensus is a question of when, not if.

Hours after a Russian foreign ministry official denounced Western threats to renew sanctions against Belgrade as unacceptable, President Boris Yeltsin's senior foreign policy adviser, Sergei Yastrzhembsky, said Moscow was considering the unprecedented step of unilateral sanctions against Latvia.

While there is sympathy in the West for Moscow's complaint that the many ethnic Russians in Latvia are denied civil rights, the threat of sanctions will disconcert Europe and the United States. No injured were reported in the Riga demonstration, which was a protest at high utility bills, not racial discrimination.

The row, last week prompted the kind of solidarity Moscow showed in respect of Iraq. Gone are the days when a pro-Western foreign ministry and presidency ignored Russia's nationalist parliament.

Western Europe and the US look like facing the same Russian unanimity on the latest Yugoslav crisis. The chance of keeping Moscow behind sanctions, let alone military action, is slim.

As with Iraq, Russia's interest in having Yugoslavia left alone is more commercial than sentimental or anti-Western.

Russia's emergent foreign policy is a kind of crooked homage to the US. The buzz words of Moscow's armchair geopoliticians — national interest, vital economic interests, spheres of influence — are all lifted from US policyspeak.

That makes it no easier for diplomats trying to keep any one of the many points of tension with Russia from leading to the first serious breakdown in relations since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Satisfaction at Mr Primakov's endorsement of limited Nato expansion and the cooling of the Iraqi crisis is already fading as Kosovo and the Baltic states' desire to join Nato loom.

Moscow remains heavily dependent on Western loans to fund its arduous slog towards a functioning market economy. If the West ever got to the point of threatening to cut that money off, it would mean the post-cold-war consensus had already broken down.

Lithuania confronts its Nazi past

James Meek in Moscow

MORE than half a century after the Nazis swept through the ghettos of Lithuania, murdering all but 11,000 of the country's 220,000 Jews, a court met last week to set a trial date for a former police chief accused of being one of the most willing bureaucrats of the slaughter.

Aleksandras Lileikis, aged 91, headed the puppet security police of Vilnius, the capital of Nazi-occupied Lithuania, during the second world war. He allegedly signed the death warrants of thousands of Jews. Mr Lileikis denies any involvement.

The trial, expected to begin in the next few weeks, will be the first of an alleged war criminal in any former Soviet country. It comes in response to accusations by Israel and the United States that Lithuania has been reluctant to face up to its past.

Mr Lileikis emigrated to the US after the war but returned to Lithuania in 1996 after a court, which had seen Nazi documents relating to his wartime role, stripped him of his US citizenship. The court was shown warrants, signed by Mr Lileikis, condemning Jews to execution in the village of Panerial, near Vilnius. One was for a six-year-old girl and her mother.

In his defence, Mr Lileikis told the US judge, Richard Stearns, that he had been "a disembodied issuer of orders", but the judge found that tens of thousands of Jews had died under his command.

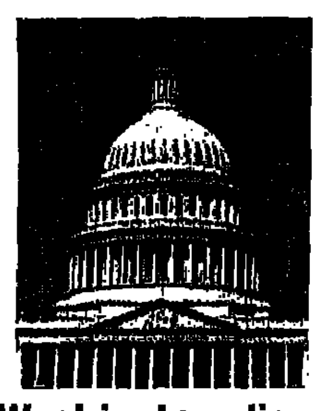
Yet it has taken heavy pressure from Israel, Washington and Jewish organisations to persuade Lithuania to act against Mr Lileikis and other suspected war criminals.

Less than a year ago prosecutors in Vilnius appeared likely to drop the case because of Mr Lileikis's poor health, despite warnings from the White House that if Lithuania wanted to join Western organisations such as Nato it would have to face past crimes squarely. But last December the Lithuanian parliament cleared the main obstacle to prosecuting Mr Lileikis, amending the criminal code to allow suspects accused of genocide to be tried even if too ill to come to court.

Prosecutors recently announced they were pressing charges against a second suspected war criminal, Mr Lileikis's former deputy, Kazys Gimzauskas, aged 89. He had also settled in the US after the war, but lost his citizenship in 1996.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
March 15 1998

Starr sets up Slick Willie for a sting



Washington diary

Martin Kettle

WATCHING OUT for facts amid the ceaseless torrent of words that continue to be published every day about the Clinton-Lewinsky affair is a bit like being a 49er panning for the glint of gold in a stream that is mostly full of dirt and slurry.

After the initial excitement it has become a painstaking, and even boring, daily chore to sift through the stream of words, but the task is far from hopeless. Just as the Gold Rush miners knew that there was gold in the hills if only they could find it, so we commentators know that there are facts in the articles and interviews if one is alert enough to spot them.

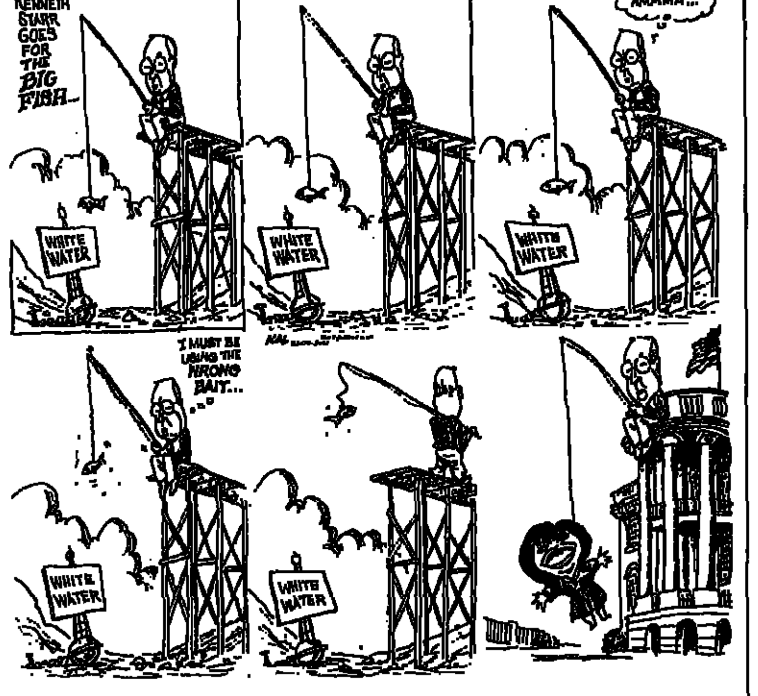
Last week, the Washington Post seemed to have struck a rich seam of new glitter when someone — and one would part with serious money to know the identity of this leaker — passed them a detailed and apparently reliable account of what increasingly appears to be the pivotal phase in the Clinton-Lewinsky crisis. This, it is now becoming clear, was the 24 hours that began on Friday January 16 — when Linda Tripp taped a conversation with Monica Lewinsky in the Ritz Carlton Hotel in Arlington, Virginia — and ended with the return to the White House the following day of a shocked Bill Clinton after his five-hour deposition hearing with Paula Jones's lawyers.

The Washington Post's scoop gave an immensely detailed account of the Clinton deposition, revealing much that had previously only been rumoured about the questioning to which he was subjected, and about the answers that Clinton gave under oath. Note those words "under oath", because if the Post's account is correct — and the response of the White House and Clinton's lawyers made clear that it is — those answers now represent a series of fixed points with which all Clinton's statements, past, present and future, must be reconciled.

Amid so much rich material, however, one particular claim caught the eye. I quote it in full, exactly as published in the Post's account:

"On Friday, January 16, the day before the deposition, Tripp lured Lewinsky to an Arlington hotel so that Starr's investigators could confront her. As the prosecutors questioned Lewinsky, Tripp left the hotel and went to her Maryland home, where she met that evening with a Jones lawyer".

If this claim is true — and it is still only a claim — it would not only provide a missing link to much of what has been happening over the past frenzied weeks, but also tell us a great deal about the prosecution methods of the independent counsel Kenneth Starr, whose role has been the object of such extravagant criticism as the crisis has eddied into a variety of side channels over recent days.



The importance of this version of events is that it would link the Starr investigation to the Jones case. What it says is that Tripp, who twice in that week had secretly recorded conversations with Lewinsky in which, it is said, she led the former intern through the whole story of her relationship with Clinton and his friend Vernon Jordan, then met the Jones team on the night before the crucial Clinton deposition. At that meeting, we may reasonably suppose that Tripp gave the Jones team a detailed version of what Lewinsky had been saying. And it is hard to believe that the meeting at Tripp's house did not take place without the knowledge, and presumably also the encouragement, of Starr.

Certainly by the time that Clinton arrived in the office of his lawyer Bob Bennett for the deposition the following morning, the Jones team was thoroughly briefed about Lewinsky. The deposition began at 10am, and when it broke for lunch two or three hours later, says the Post, the Jones team had still not asked a single question about their own client's case. All the questioning had been about Lewinsky and about five other women who the Jones lawyers wanted to link sexually to Clinton as part of their effort to establish a pattern of harassment that would boost Jones's action.

The Post's account says that Clinton was surprised by the detail of the questioning to which he was subjected. Well he might have been. For he was the victim of a sting operation. From the Jones team's point of view the Lewinsky material was manna from heaven, helping to revive their flagging action against the president. But from Starr's point of view, the deposition was a unique opportunity to try to entrap Clinton into inconsistencies that were potentially material for perjury charges.

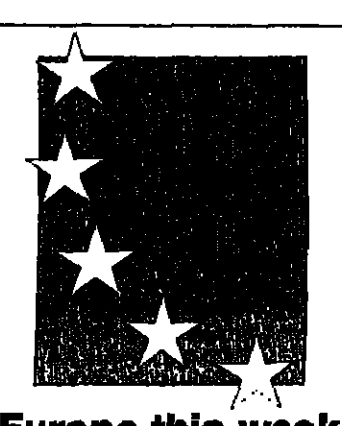
No wonder Clinton was taken aback. No wonder there were what the Post, presumably paraphrasing the leaker, called "moments of pique". No wonder also that when Clinton finally returned to the White House that night, he immediately closeted himself with aides and advisers, calling his secretary Betty Currie to get her to come to the White House the next morning so that they could discuss their versions of events.

When people talk, as Hillary Clinton did a few days later, of a vast rightwing conspiracy against the Clinton White House, they may or may not be exaggerating. When a White House aide such as Sidney Blumenthal alleges, as he did last week, that Starr is engaged in "one of the most bizarre cases of prosecutorial abuse and misconduct in our nation's history", he may feed the impression that the independent counsel is a politically driven guided missile.

Both of these allegations may in the end turn out to be true. Or they may not. But the Washington Post's version of the events of January 16-17 casts little new light on these sweeping claims. On these matters, as Jordan said as he emerged from his two days of evidence before Starr's grand jury last week, "We will see what time will tell us".

What the Post's account does do, however, is illuminate a series of actions and collusions between the lawyers and investigators in Starr's office and the Jones camp, which constitute a much more specific plot. Whether it was rightwing conspiracy or merely a legally, ethically and politically misjudged series of actions will also emerge in due course. But it was a none the less chilling for being so focused.

Beware of the EU bearing gifts



Europe this week

Martin Walker

WHEN THE president of the United States wants to make a forceful point, aircraft carriers start to move. When the European Union wants to assert itself, it offers a trade deal. This may be a more civilised way of doing things. But the EU is going to have to learn that its diplomacy by trade pact is subject to exactly the same rules as the aircraft carriers. They must be the expression of a coherent political will.

The EU last week offered two juicy trade deals, one to the US and the other to Turkey. Neither one is what it seems, because neither had the backing of all 15 member states. Sir Leon Brittan, the EU trade commissioner, offered "A New Transatlantic Marketplace" to the US without taking the elementary precaution of ensuring that the entire European Commission, let alone the member states in the Council of Ministers, was in full support of it. Both French commissioners were opposed.

At least the full Commission endorsed the offer to Turkey, hoping to avoid a complete breakdown in relations with a thinly veiled appeal to the other member states to pressure Greece into lifting its blockade of the $430 million already promised to Turkey under the long-agreed customs union.

But with the grim inevitability of a Greek tragedy, a serious crisis is approaching. The EU is scheduled to open accession negotiations with Cyprus on March 31, a move that Turkey says will force it to respond by strengthening its own links to Turkish-occupied northern Cyprus. This could mean permanent partition, and in practical terms make it impossible for the EU to absorb a part or the whole of a divided island.

Europe's carrot was the formal offer to Turkey of a status very close to EU membership. It would include a strengthened customs union, with virtual free trade in services and farm produce, a range of co-operative ventures in everything from industrial policy to telecommunications, and participation in EU programmes. But this rings hollow while Greece blocks the customs union funds, and while Athens and Ankara both play at brinkmanship over Cyprus.

"The EU is committed to the process of broadening and deepening our relations with Turkey," the EU's foreign affairs commissioner, Hans van den Broek, said last week. "We need to find solutions in the Council [of Ministers] to the problem of the customs union funds. It is urgent that the Council adopts as soon as possible the financial regulation of the special action concerning Turkey."

Under EU etiquette, the Commission cannot bring itself to call a spade a spade and name Greece as the immediate problem. But lurking behind Greece's objections lie other obstacles. There is Germany's reluctance to say that an accession process is under way that could eventually allow free movement of Turks into Germany, to join the 2 million already there. And there was the provocative remark by the Luxembourg prime minister, Jean-Claude Juncker, at the Luxembourg summit last December when he hosted the EU summit, that he did not care "to sit at the same Euro-table as Turkish torturers".

As well as the "new European strategy" for Turkey, the Commission also approved last week the text of the second annual report to the European parliament on relations with Turkey. A factual rather than a policy document, this highlighted another of the most vexed issues, Turkey's human rights record.

"In regard to the situation concerning the rights of man and the democratisation process, the commission finds that the programme of the Turkish government has so far had no discernible effect," the report said.

Sir Leon's plan for a new transatlantic marketplace would scrap all remaining tariffs on goods, agree common regulations and liberalise services between the US and the EU, and add $198 billion to US-European trade. The proposal, which has received a preliminary welcome in Washington after long discussions with the Clinton administration and with both sides in the US Congress, is being sold by Sir Leon as a way "to enhance the broader political relationship between the US and the European Union".

Although the scheme contains no explicit reference to the new single currency, it looks to a future dominated by the dollar and the euro, from the two economic systems which between them account for two-thirds of world trade and more than half of the planet's GDP. After several years of fruitless discussions about a Trans-Atlantic Free Trade Area, the marketplace proposal is being launched now because the Asian financial crisis has revealed the limitations of the Clinton administration's early infatuation with the Pacific Rim.

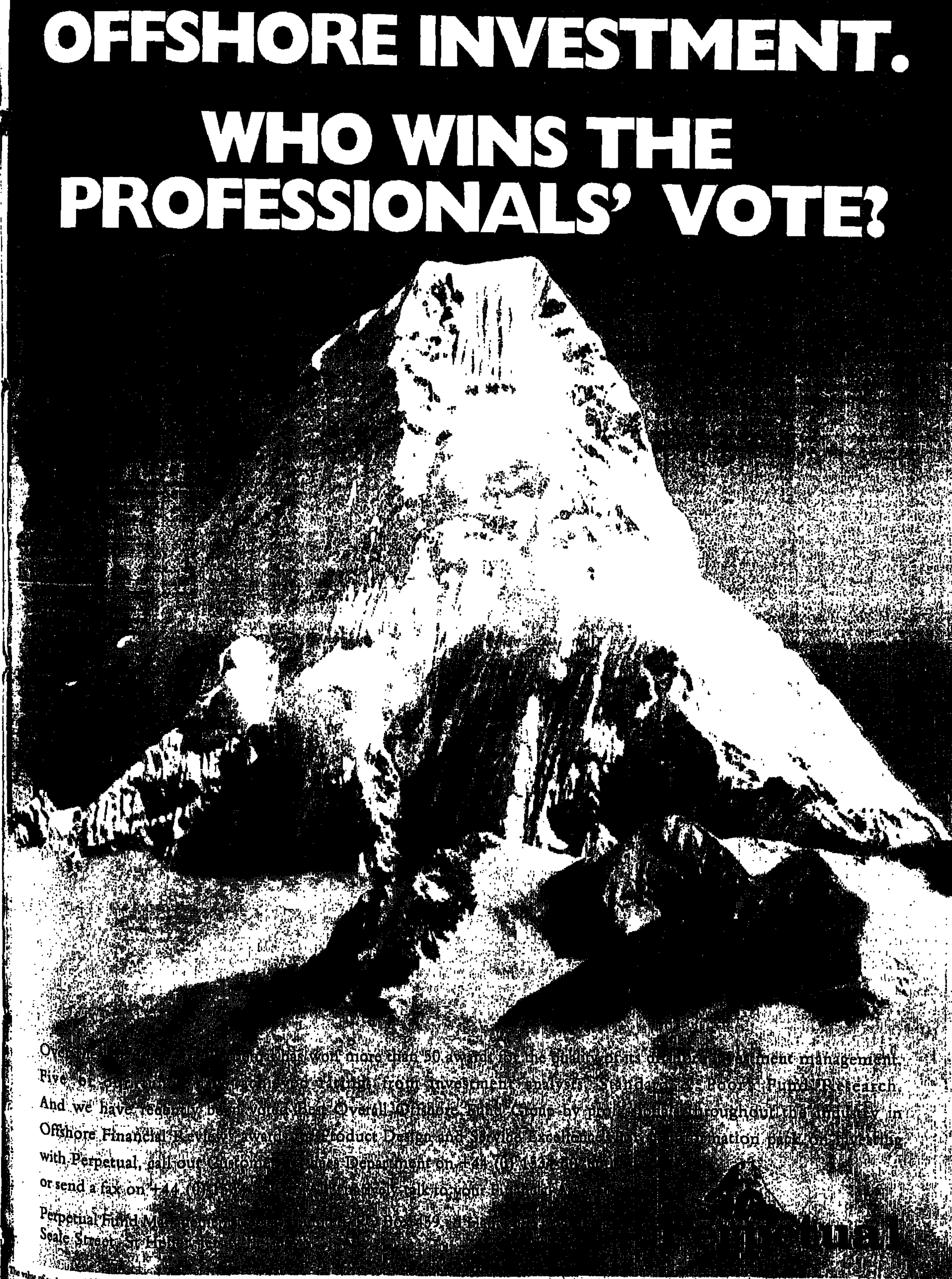
The plan is highly ambitious, with the EU recognising that freedom of services will also require some liberalisation of visa and work permit regimes, so that providers of services will be able to work freely in both the US and Europe.

The key provisions of the scheme envisage:

- A free trade area in services;
- a commitment to end all tariffs on goods by 2010;
- further liberalisation, aiming at a free trade area, of government procurement, intellectual property and investment;
- scrapping of technical and non-tariff barriers to trade through an extensive process of mutual recognition of technical and safety standards and of consumer safeguards.

The plan deliberately excludes the most contentious issues of transatlantic trade — agricultural goods and audio-visual services, the areas on which earlier proposals to forge a US-EU free trade area broke down. But this was not enough to mollify the suspicious French, who muttered that this was a doomed "Titanic project". They claim that World Trade Organisation rules would, in effect, require Europe to offer the same free access to all other WTO members, with scant chance of imposing social, environmental or competition rules.

Sir Leon may squeeze the plan past the Commission this week, but the Council of Ministers lies in wait. It would be unwise, therefore, to assume that either of the EU's grandiose trade deals will come to pass. With policy incoherence such as this, it may be just as well that the EU commands no aircraft carriers.



The Week in Britain James Lewis

Blair's friends in the north stick to socialism

OLD-FASHIONED socialist fervour, largely purged from the New Labour party, still flourishes north of the border, as the Prime Minister discovered to his discomfiture when he went to lecture his troops at the annual conference of the Scottish Labour party in Perth.

Tony Blair warned delegates that they would need to keep their nerve in the months ahead because keeping within a prudent financial path was going to be difficult. Hitting out at the spending demands of leftwing critics, he said that tough actions and hard choices had to be made "because we are in the real world".

The conference listened politely, then passed a number of resolutions critical of Government policy, and another to scrap the Trident missile system, thereby releasing £1.5 billion for housing and education. Delegates were clearly asking why Trident should be protected from the tough questioning being applied to other areas of public spending.

Mr Blair first clashed with his comrades north of the border over his insistence that Scottish self-rule should be subject to a referendum. More recently, the Scots have been angered by the intention of the Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine, to veto plans to legally enshrine "gender balance" in the Edinburgh parliament. Nor are they pleased by Mr Blair's reported scheme to exclude troublesome leftwingers when candidates for that parliament are selected.

In England, Labour's policies are fashioned by the need to beat the Conservatives at the next general election. In Scotland, where Tories are almost an extinct species, the main threat comes from left-leaning nationalists, which explains party members' attachment to pre-Blairite socialist policy relics.

FREEMASONS decided against a confrontation with MPs, and escaped a charge of contempt of Parliament, by reluctantly handing over the names of 16 members who may have been involved in controversial police investigations.

The Commons Home Affairs Select Committee, inquiring into freemasonry in the police and the judiciary, asked the Masons last summer to identify their members from a list of 160 officers involved in investigations such as the Birmingham pub bombings. When the request was refused, the committee issued a formal order, to be complied with within 14 days.

The United Grand Lodge of England waited until the last possible moment before handing over the names. The lodge's Grand Secretary, Commander Michael Higham, said his board was "extremely uncomfortable" about being compelled to comply, and he would be writing to the Prime Minister to express concern about the erosion of "long-established rights of lawful association".

MORE THAN 300 ministers, former ministers and civil servants are expected to give evidence to a public inquiry into the causes of BSE (mad cow disease), the way it was handled by government, and the link between it and a new variant of CJD (Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease), from which around 20 people have died.

The inquiry had been expected to report by the end of the year. But even as it opened, its chairman, Lord Justice Phillips, asked for an extra six months, saying he did not want a report which was superficial because it had been rushed.

There are hopes that the worldwide ban on British beef could be eased this month following a vote by most European states to let Northern Ireland resume exports from herds certified free of BSE. Northern Ireland is the only region that meets the European Union's stringent conditions because it has for more than eight years used a computerised system for tracking its cattle from birth.

GRANADA television publicly apologised to the Marks and Spencer retail group, and agreed to pay an estimated £50,000 damages and more than £600,000 costs, over a programme alleging that the company exploited child labour in a Moroccan factory.

The settlement was reached three days into what could have been a six-week libel trial when the judge, Mr Justice Popplewell, decided to turn the action into a "sudden death" trial, inviting the jury to view the programme and decide what it meant, without hearing any evidence from witnesses — a course that could pave the way for swift settlements in future actions.

The jury decided that the programme did give viewers the impression that M&S had deliberately misled customers by selling garments labelled "Made in the UK" that it knew were made abroad. Granada could supply no evidence that M&S had such knowledge.

THE PUBLISHERS HarperCollins, owned by the media tycoon, Rupert Murdoch, made an abject, "unreserved" apology to Chris Patten, the last governor of Hong Kong, for suggesting that his forthcoming book, East And West, was "too boring" to publish.

HarperCollins's rejection of the manuscript was seen as evidence of Mr Murdoch's media empire kowtowing to Beijing in order to protect his business interests in East Asia. The firm will pay Mr Patten the rest of his advance of £125,000. His book, strongly critical of China, will be published by Macmillan.




AND WHEN DID YOU LAST SEE YOUR FLOORBOARDS?

Big spending in 'a noble cause'

PARLIAMENTARY SKETCH
Simon Hoggart

LORD IRVINE, appearing before the Commons public administration committee, might have adopted the approach humorous, with a few self-deprecating jokes about the £650,000 redecoration of his apartments at Westminster.

He could have turned up before the public administration committee wearing white overalls, with paint-spattered shoes, and a beat-up radio smeared with putty. They would have loved him. (Nancy Reagan, faced with similar charges of overspending on interior decor and crockery, came to a dinner for White House correspondents in ragged clothes and an old straw hat, singing Second Hand Rose. The issue was dead and buried overnight.)

Instead, he took the approach pompous. He was not merely right when he requested his refurbishments: he was working "in a noble cause" — like extending the franchise or defeating Hitler.

"Future generations will be grateful," he insisted, often.

The Lord Chancellor does not so much answer questions as unroll a speech, like valuable hand-blocked wallpaper. Nothing is ever true, but instead "is the case, across the board, as it were, for all manner of reasons". He never does anything so plebeian as agree with something, but examines himself and declares that "I find myself hospitable to the idea".

He treated the committee like a headmaster inspecting the debating society. "This is a speech, not a question," he announced to one impertinent young MP. He instructed them to pause for his answers. When he was a QC, mere judges probably quailed before his admonitions.

The more he was attacked, the more selfless he appeared, in his own eyes at least. Andrew Tyrie (Conservative, Chichester) wondered if he regretted the long letter he had written to Black Rod, explaining what connoisseurs he and Lady Irvine were, and how perfectly justified it was for fine works of art to be shipped immediately to decorate their quarters. Had the leak of this letter proved embarrassing?

Embarrassed? Perish the thought! A pigeon defecating on his wig; now that might have been embarrassing. "Future generations will agree, and will see this as a storm in a teacup," he vouchsafed. He could be right. Peter Mandelson has probably spent the last month in a sperm bank, conducting a focus group on the views of future generations.

He went on, "I don't think that apologies are due. I read the commentators who say, 'Three cheers that this work has been done! Three cheers for the committee that chose to make the decision!'"

Suddenly we had a picture of a nation rejoicing at the redecoration. It was like VE Day. There would be school holidays to celebrate the pasting of the last roll on the wall.

The trouble is that even though the Lord Chancellor is more pompous than it is possible to imagine, he may be right. When Pugin did the interior decorations of the Palace he insisted on standards that cost nearly £4 million a year to maintain today. Either you keep it up, or go in for chipboard and Formica. As Lord Irvine put it, "We are not talking about something down at the DIY store".

'Foul play' over passive smoking report

Sarah Boseley

THE tobacco industry was accused by doctors of foul play last week for claiming that an unpublished European study cleared passive smoking of causing cancer.

There was angry reaction to British American Tobacco's allegation that publication of the study was being held up by the World Health Organisation, which had commissioned it, because its conclusions would set back the anti-smoking crusade.

BAT was accused of deliberately drawing wrong conclusions from the European study in the hope of laying a false trail ahead of what may be a damaging report from the Department of Health. A Government review of the evidence, due to be published this week, is likely to conclude passive smoking is a killer.

Malcolm Law, one of the authors of a definitive analysis of the research to date into passive smoking, which was published in the British Medical Journal last October, said the tobacco industry's interpretation of the WHO study was wrong. For the past 10 years studies had clearly shown that those who live with smokers had a 25 per cent increased risk of developing cancer. The European study was no different.

"The authors' own conclusion is that their study is totally consistent with previous work," he said.

The new study, by Rodolfo Saracci, had not been held up by the WHO, he said. It had been submitted to the Journal of the National Cancer Institute in the US. Any delay was caused by the lengthy process of peer review.

The tobacco industry had claimed the WHO study was the largest of its type and that it had found not only that passive smoking does not kill, but that it may even have a protective effect.

Doctors from the British Medical Association retorted that the study of 650 lung cancer patients and 1,542 healthy people was dwarfed by the 4,600 cases that Dr Law reviewed last October.

Bill O'Neill, science research adviser at the BMA, said there were signs that the industry, which had chosen for years to ignore the attacks on it, had decided to become pro-active in the past few weeks.

"They are aware of all the publicity coming this week and they are trying to react to it," he said. The industry had also been dismayed, he believed, by the litigation brought in this country. A class action involving 43 cases of people against the tobacco companies is proceeding towards the courts.

Chris Proctor, head of science at BAT, claimed that the research showed the risk of lung cancer from the environment was so small as to be unquantifiable. "If this study is valid and did not find any statistically valid risk, you have to ask whether there can be any risk at all."

Gordon McVie, director general of the Cancer Research Campaign, said BAT's interpretation of the report was "highly misleading".

Washington Post, page 16

Straw sets McAliskey free

Owen Bowcott and John Mullin

JACK STRAW on Monday provoked Unionist anger and nationalist delight by halting the extradition of Roisin McAliskey — wanted in Germany over an IRA mortar attack on a British army base two years ago — on the grounds that she was suffering from poor mental health.

The Home Secretary said medical reports meant that extradition would be "unjust and oppressive".

Ms McAliskey, who gave birth to her daughter, Lionnir, while on bail, has been freed after 16 months in detention. But she is to remain in hospital for further medical treatment, said her mother, Bernadette McAliskey, the former MP for Mid-Ulster.

The timing sparked a row in Northern Ireland, with Unionists labelling the move another concession to Sinn Fein ahead of its critical meeting with the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, probably on Thursday. It will decide whether to return to the multi-party talks at Stormont after the Downing Street summit.

Ian Paisley Jr, justice spokesman for the Democratic Unionist Party, said: "I am totally disgusted, but not surprised at this sop to the republican movement."

Ulster Unionist MP Ken Maginnis said: "No one will be surprised if she now makes a miraculous recovery. The decision by the Home Secretary will, unfortunately, put doubt in the minds of the international community about the UK's commitment to extradition of terrorist suspects."

The Irish government, under renewed pressure from Sinn Fein to deliver nationalist demands at Stormont, was delighted. David Andrews, Irish foreign affairs minister, said he had raised Ms McAliskey's situation several times with the Northern Ireland Secretary, Mo Mowlam.

Ms McAliskey, aged 26, was arrested in Northern Ireland in November 1996 after the German authorities identified her as a suspect in the attack on Osnabruck barracks in June 1996. She won bail after she was examined by psychiatrists, provided she stayed at the mother-and-baby unit at the Maudsley hospital in south London.

Under the terms of the extradition agreement, the British courts did not need to be satisfied that there was a case to be answered. Ms McAliskey's lawyers had heavily criticised the identification evidence linking her to the June 1996 attack, in which there were no injuries.

The German government's arrest warrant said the evidence against her relied upon the statement of an eyewitness, who said he saw her at a holiday home in Germany rented by the IRA active service unit, and that her fingerprints were found on a cellophane wrapping.

Her supporters said the eyewitness had retracted his statement on German television. They suggested that the fingerprints could have been found elsewhere and transferred to Germany.

It is believed that Ms McAliskey's mental condition stemmed from her time in Castlereagh holding centre, Belfast, where she was first interviewed. She was later sent to London and held in both Belmarsh and Holloway prison.

● The maverick Loyalist Volunteer Force, thought responsible for the killings in Poyntzpass, Co Armagh, last week of Catholic Damien Trainor and his lifelong Protestant friend, Philip Allen, issued threats this week against Protestants who collude in the peace process. They included churchmen, politicians and the business community.

Body may be exhumed in Woodward appeal

Joanna Coles
in Boston, Massachusetts

LAWYERS for Louise Woodward, the British au pair convicted of manslaughter last autumn, on Monday raised the possibility of exhuming the body of nine-month-old Matthew Eappen to try to prove her innocence.

Woodward's defence team also confirmed at a 55-minute appeal hearing in Boston before a panel of seven supreme court judges that they may agree to a new trial.

Andrew Good said crucial medical evidence, including a piece of Matthew's skull, had been thrown away, despite a court order, before the defence could order their own autopsy. He said the medical evidence that pointed to an old injury was not a matter of conjecture but "one of science".

"We could have ended this case before it started had we had the skull fracture," Mr Good said. "If the evidence were clear to support that theory, which it may have been, you get yourself a new trial," the chief justice, Herbert Wilkins, replied.

The judges had pointed questions for the prosecutor, Sabita Singh. Several asked if the prosecution had withheld evidence, to which Ms Singh replied: "It's unclear."

The age of the injury to Matthew's skull is crucial to the understanding of the case because the prosecution has always insisted that Woodward killed Matthew in a fit of rage after slamming his head on a hard surface on February 4, 1997. But the defence claim the injury was at least three weeks old and could have been an accident or caused by someone else.

Woodward was found guilty of second degree murder by a jury last October. But in a surprise decision 10 days later, Judge Hiller Zobel released her after reducing her conviction to one of involuntary manslaughter and altering her 15-year sentence to the 279 days she had already spent in custody.

Both sides are appealing against his decision. The defence wants her conviction overturned. The prosecution wants the original verdict and sentence reinstated and argues that the judge overreached his powers.

Mr Good said: "It's our contention that this case raises a question as to whether a legal judgment in this particular case may flout conclusive, uncontested, scientific evidence."

Ms Singh said the medical evidence was a matter of conjecture and that the jury had rejected the defence's argument and that of medical experts. She argued that Judge Zobel had abused his power by reducing the conviction to manslaughter.

The seven judges have 120 days to decide. They have five options: to reinstate the jury's verdict and original sentence; to uphold Judge Zobel's decision; to call for a retrial; to quash the conviction completely; to uphold Judge Zobel's decision but impose a heavier sentence, which could result in Woodward returning to jail.

Glaxo cuts Aids drug price

GLAXO Wellcome is slashing the price of its Aids treatment, AZT, for pregnant women in developing countries, *writes Lisa Buckingham.*

The company is reducing the cost by up to three-quarters following new trials which show that a small dose can inhibit transmission of the HIV virus by mothers to their newborn babies.

It is the first time one of the big pharmaceuticals groups has reduced the price of an Aids drug in an effort to help those poor countries most affected by the disease. Health officials reckon about 600,000 babies died last year after contracting the HIV virus from their mothers.

Glaxo's initiative comes just a month after SmithKline Beecham said it would invest up to $1 billion in drugs to end elephantiasis in the developing world, where about 120 million people are affected.

Drugs groups have been accused of making gestures to poorer countries only when their costly drugs come out of patent and their earnings value declines dramatically, but AZT still has years to run.



Class action . . . Students on the march in Manchester last week joined more than 2 million undergraduates across the country who walked out of lectures over the Government's plans to introduce £1,000-a-year tuition fees (*Me over we, page 28*) PHOTO: DON McPHEE

Asylum-seekers system an 'utter shambles'

Lucy Patton

THE Chief Inspector of Prisons has described Britain's system for dealing with asylum-seekers as a "complete and utter shambles" after visiting one of Britain's biggest detention centres.

According to a leaked letter, Sir David Ramsbotham condemned the system in a report after he made a surprise visit to Campsfield House in Oxford, where inmates have complained of racism from staff, heavy-handed security, insufficient food and prison-style incarceration.

The report said the centre — run by the Group 4 security firm — was "a complete and utter shambles, not only as far as the immigration policy is concerned but over all areas connected with immigration detainees and asylum-seekers".

It added: "Group 4 have been put in an impossible situation. They do not know what rights and responsibilities they have in dealing with detainees."

A United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees inspector who visited the centre said: "Britain has more people in detention for longer periods of time than any other European country."

About 70,000 asylum-seekers at any one time are waiting to find whether they will be allowed to remain in the UK, of whom about 800 are held in detention. Labour pledged before the last election to reform the system.

The Home Secretary, Jack Straw, announced a review of the whole asylum system after rioting at Campsfield House last year. Sixteen detainees were arrested after the rioting, 13 were charged and nine are in custody awaiting trial. Charges against four others were dropped.

A Home Office spokeswoman said no date had been set for the publication of the chief inspector's report.

In Brief

ALMOST 2,000 images of child pornography have been removed from the Internet in the past year after complaints to the British industry watchdog.

TREVOR REES-JONES, the bodyguard and sole survivor of the crash that killed Diana, Princess of Wales, spoke to the French judge handling the case about his improved recollection, but added little new information.

BRITISH troops in the Gulf have belatedly been offered vaccination against anthrax, the main biological weapon Saddam Hussein is believed to have hidden from United Nations weapons inspectors.

ANDREW ARMSTRONG, an alcoholic who killed three cyclists after being seen at the wheel of his car clutching a bottle of vodka, has been jailed for seven years and banned from driving for 15 years.

THE Seventh Day Adventists have become the first minor Christian denomination to win state funding for a school when the Government said it was satisfied with standards at John Loughborough secondary in Haringey, north London.

AT LEAST one in eight 14- and 15-year-olds will have used an illegal drug in the past month, but the survey by the Schools Health Education Unit also found that fewer children reported having experimented with drugs than in previous years.

THE Government is to legislate to stop men accused of rape cross-examining alleged victims in court after dispensing with the services of lawyers.

SO MANY people detained by police are under the influence of alcohol or drugs that the use of detoxification centres should be considered, the Audit Commission reports. Fifty-four per cent of police surgeon call-outs relate to drugs and alcohol.

PROSTITUTES working in Glasgow are to be issued with personal attack alarms by police following the murder of Margo Lafferty, the seventh killing in the city's red light district in the past six years.

TONY BLAIR has attended mass alone at Westminster Cathedral several times since Christmas, prompting speculation about the extent to which he is drawn to the Roman Catholic faith practised by his wife, Cherie, and their three children.

THE Government has off-loaded £1 billion of student debt to NatWest Bank, which agreed to maintain the existing repayment terms for borrowers, including rates of interest limited to the rate of inflation.



Tories talk out anti-hunting bill

Ewen MacAskill

THE anti-fox-hunting bill was doomed last week after Conservative MPs deployed a series of time-wasting devices to block it.

Labour MP Mike Foster's bill was expected to be given one last airing this week — on Friday — but its supporters privately conceded that it now has no chance of progress.

Conservatives used a series of arcane parliamentary devices to wreck it. In colourful but aggravating scenes, they filibustered, threw top hats around the chamber, made numerous points of order, and were even warned against using up time by walking slowly through the voting lobbies.

But anti-fox-hunting MPs and ministers predicted that though they have lost this battle, such is the strength of feeling that the Government will have to bring in its own legislation, at least before the end of the Parliament.

Sympathetic ministers insisted the Government will not be able to ignore the scale of the support in the party and in the country for a ban.

A move will be made to tack an anti-fox-hunting amendment to a crime bill later this year, though the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, will oppose it. The Government does not want the legislative timetable clogged up and is more likely to bring in a bill of its own in another session.

Among Conservative MPs opposing the bill were the former deputy prime minister, Michael Heseltine, former agriculture minister Douglas Hogg, and former defence minister Nicholas Soames.

Mr Hogg said: "I think it is a monstrous infringement of civil rights and I oppose it on that basis."

The Commons debated the Wild Mammals (Hunting With Dogs) Bill for five hours but only succeeded in completing voting on one of 13 groups of amendments tabled as wrecking tactics by the Tories. When time ran out at 2.30pm, MPs were still debating the second group of amendments.

One of the Government's business managers said: "Even if we gave it time every Friday, the Conservatives would just keep putting down amendments to block it. It has no chance."

The official Downing Street line continued to be neutral, insisting Mr Foster's was a private member's bill, and therefore not its responsibility.

During much of the debate, Conservative MPs talked among themselves, with Labour MPs sitting in silence, anxious not to waste any more time than necessary. As part of the time-wasting, Tory MPs debated the definition of "a dog", with one insisting that if the bill went through, "dogs" would be banned from fox-hunting but not bitches.

One of the few Labour MPs to speak, Kate Hoey, who leads an all-party band of MPs calling themselves the Middle Way, condemned the bill as "draconian".

Call to renew pension link to earnings

Lucy Ward

BARONESS Castle, the former Labour cabinet minister, last week launched a renewed assault on the Government over pensions, claiming National Insurance coffers were "swimming in cash" that could be used to restore the link between pensions and earnings.

Lady Castle, at 87 still a formidable campaigner on the issue, warned that unless the link she forged as social security secretary in 1975 is re-established, Labour will be endorsing the Tory policy of letting the current basic state pension "wither on the vine".

Publishing evidence from the campaign group, Security in Retirement for Everyone, she said parliamentary answers had shown that almost £1 billion in Treasury grants to the National Insurance Fund remained unused in the current financial year.

Pete Townsend, emeritus professor of social policy at Bristol University and co-author of the evidence pamphlet, Fair Shares for Pensioners, said tying pensions to earnings rather than prices was "patently affordable", though it would ultimately mean increased National Insurance contributions.

The Department for Social Security argues that the Treasury grant is a maximum sum, made available to supplement the National Insurance fund to ensure that all pensions and benefits are paid.

Lady Castle's group calls on the Government to fulfil its manifesto pledge that the basic state pension will remain the foundation of pensions policy. It also outlines concerns over the State Earnings Related Pension Scheme (Serps). Instead of "moving implacably to downgrade Serps" the Government should offer people the choice between a secure pay-as-you-go scheme, leading to a guaranteed pension, and "the lottery of playing the market".

● Welfare groups last week declared they would fight on to overturn curbs on war pensions for deafness, after the Government upheld the restrictions on the advice of hearing experts.

Although Labour in opposition had opposed the curbs, an expert panel appointed since the general election has concluded that published research does justify the measures.

The Royal British Legion is meanwhile to bring a number of test cases to challenge application of the curbs.

Prescott may claw back profits from rail sell-off

Keith Harper

TOUGHER rules forcing rail companies to share up to 25 per cent of profits with the Government are being considered by the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, in an attempt to close loopholes in the resale of large parts of the industry.

Mr Prescott said last week he had no power to prevent the takeover of Great Western Trains and North West Trains by the bus and train operator FirstGroup for £140 million in a move that has made millionaires of several former British Rail staff.

But Whitehall sources made clear that the Government would act to protect the interests of the taxpayer. This would require legislation to ensure that the Government would be able to claw back some of the profits in any re-sale. The downside is that it could take up to two years, by which time other companies could be sold on for large profits.

Mr Prescott put a brave face on the deal approved by the rail franchise director John O' Brien, but agreed he was not "totally happy".

"All I could do was to insist that Mr O'Brien negotiate something for the passenger, rather than a millionaire rail director, and he's done that."

Mr O'Brien is restricted on what he can demand because he is acting under legislation introduced by the Tories in their hurry to force through rail privatisation.

Within hours of the deal being announced, GWT was fined £30,000 by the Environment Agency for polluting a Plymouth stream. It covered a pond with thick, black oil in an area with a diverse aquatic life.

Meanwhile Railtrack was last week facing a furious row with the rail regulator for imposing a 25 per cent cut on its track maintenance bill when parts of its 11,000 mile network have been declared unsafe.

Less than 48 hours after revelations that the Health and Safety Executive could start prosecutions against the company for poor maintenance, Railtrack confirmed that it has warned companies bidding for work that it wants to save £80 million on its annual repairs bill.

The revelation that passenger safety is at risk because parts of the railway are badly maintained comes at a politically sensitive time for the Government. Mr Prescott, is in the middle of negotiations with Railtrack about a rescue bid for the 68-mile Channel Tunnel rail link.

About turn . . . Potential black and Asian recruits to the Household Cavalry — an élite formation with a bad record of racial discrimination — visit its Knightsbridge barracks in London. The cavalry hopes the recruitment drive will avoid the prospect of humiliation by legal action under the Race Relations Act PHOTO: SEAN SMITH

'Victimised' police inspector moves to a new force

Martin Wainwright

THE most senior policewoman caught up in a recent spate of sex harassment cases is to transfer to another force after an industrial tribunal castigated senior colleagues for victimising her, *writes Martin Wainwright.*

Inspector Dena Fleming, who was left "without friends or faith" in the Lincolnshire force following a two-year suspension, is moving to Humberside, where she began her career as a cadet.

Mrs Fleming, aged 40 and a mother of two, was the victim of a "set-up" involving senior officers after she complained of sexual discrimination, the tribunal ruled last month.

Colleagues were accused of trying to discredit her and making her life impossible because she had dared to challenge the traditional way of doing things.

She had her warrant card returned last week and was told all disciplinary charges against her had been dropped. But friends said that the atmosphere in the Lincolnshire force was such that she would find a return to her duties impossible.

She was welcomed to Humberside, where her husband, Max, is an acting sergeant after a similar transfer from Lincolnshire, by the assistant chief constable, Gordon Clark. "We are pleased that Inspector Fleming has joined us and she is looking forward to getting on with her career."

In a statement read by her solicitor, Ms Fleming said: "The past two-and-a-half years have been sheer hell for me and my family."

Doubt cast on economy link to schools

John Carvel

THE Government's favourite think-tank last week sought to demolish the Prime Minister's argument that Britain's future economic prosperity depends on raising standards of reading, writing and arithmetic in schools.

Ministers have set ambitious targets to improve the literacy and numeracy of 11-year-olds in the belief that this would lay the groundwork for more competition with the tiger economies of the Pacific rim.

But the Institute of Public Policy Research said there was no evidence that boosting national attainment in maths or literacy would have any effect on national economic performance.

"What could be a sober and informed debate about English education is in danger of being drowned out by the simplistic and often shrill rhetoric which seems to dominate policy-making in education," said Peter Robinson, the institute's chief economist.

Ministers were misled by the "tyranny" of international league tables showing 14-year olds' performance in maths. These put England 24th out of 40 countries, lagging far behind Singapore, Korea, Japan and Hong Kong.

But there was no correlation between positions in the international maths league and economic prosperity, as measured by GNP per head. Former eastern bloc countries such as the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Bulgaria performed well in maths without reaping the economic dividend. The United States and Germany were more economically prosperous, but their students were close to England's maths results.

There were arguments for improving education, but these should not be judged from the perspective of what was best for the economy, Dr Robinson said.

Hereditary peers to go in Lords reform

Ewen MacAskill

THE Government is to end months of hesitation over Lords reform by pressing ahead with the abolition of hereditary peers later this year.

The decision of senior Labour figures is partly to take revenge on Tory peers for leaking details last week of consultations on the issue with the Government.

Abolition of hereditary peers will be included in the Queen's Speech in the autumn, and the ground-breaking constitutional bill is expected to begin its parliamentary passage before Christmas.

In January a cabinet committee was set up to look at alternatives for the Lords. Labour had been willing to seek a compromise with the Tories on Lords reform in the belief that this would be the easiest way to bring it about.

The Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine; the Leader of the Lords, Lord Richard; the Home Secretary, Jack Straw; and other cabinet ministers had been debating the best way to meet the Conservative objection that the Government's position was irrational: planning to abolish hereditary peers without saying what to put in their place.

In the face of this criticism, Labour had considered a "big bang" approach, combining abolition of the hereditary peers with the introduction of an elected chamber. But relations between Labour and Tory peers were soured last week when the Conservatives set out to embarrass the Government by leaking the news of joint consultations.

Labour has now decided to drop the big bang approach. "We are going ahead without having mapped it out in every detail. We will worry about what to put in place of the hereditaries the following year," the source said.

The scene is set for a confrontation between the Commons and the Lords. The Conservatives retain a massive majority in the Lords and can easily delay the bill.

If the bill goes through, the Lords will temporarily be made up only of life peers. Labour is likely in the end to opt for a second chamber that is partly elected and partly appointed.

The Conservatives had been seeking a compromise in which some of their most active hereditary peers could be made into life peers. The Government will use that as a bargaining counter to try to get its bill through next year.

If the Conservative peers fight the bill all the way, seriously delaying its passage, Labour can resort to the tactics used by the Liberal government in 1911, threatening to swamp the Lords by appointing Labour peers to give itself an overall majority.

Until the Tory leak last week the cabinet committee had been in deadlock over tactics. Ministers such as Mr Straw and the Leader of the Commons, Ann Taylor, had favoured abolition of the hereditary peers as a first stage, but Lord Irvine and Lord Richard wanted to explore the possibility of a big bang.

● Peers examining the scientific arguments over the medical and recreational use of cannabis have made a pact not to admit publicly whether they have ever taken the drug themselves.

The newly convened House of Lords sub-committee will hear from doctors, drugs advice agencies, government departments and cannabis users during its eight-month inquiry.

The committee's report is not expected to make any recommendation on decriminalisation.

Members have confined their remit to the scientific aspects of the drug's use. They will seek to establish the strength of scientific evidence in favour of permitting the medical use of cannabis and of maintaining prohibition for recreational use.



One of the 200 miners waiting to start his last shift before the Cornish tin mine at South Crofty finally closed PHOTO. SAM MORGAN MOORE

Cornwall's last tin mine shuts

Geoffrey Gibbs

THOUSANDS of years of Cornish history drew to an emotional close last week when miners emerged into the daylight after completing the last drilling and blasting shift at Britain's only remaining tin mine.

As they left the gates of South Crofty for an uncertain future in one of the most economically disadvantaged parts of Britain, the grim-faced tinners were greeted by a vigil of hundreds of men and women, come to mourn the passing of an industry that once formed the bedrock of the local economy.

"It is not just the jobs that are going, it's a whole way of life that is being destroyed," said Mark Kaczmarek, a skilled underground worker at Crofty for more than 17 years.

The South Crofty mine at Pool has been living under the threat of closure since last August, when the mine's Canadian owners decided to cease production in the face of heavy losses caused by the strength of sterling and falling world tin prices.

Closure of the mine marks the demise of an industry that dates back more than 2,000 years to the recovery of alluvial tin from the region's moors and streams. But the discovery of cheaper overseas deposits forced thousands of Cornish miners to emigrate.

Bulger killers ruling may change law

A FUNDAMENTAL change in the way the English legal system deals with child killers was in prospect last week after the two boys who murdered toddler James Bulger were given the go-ahead to challenge the Government in the European Court of Human Rights, *writes Clare Dyer.*

Lawyers for the boys argued that they were subjected to "inhuman and degrading treatment" in the way they were tried, detained and sentenced. If the challenge succeeds, the Home Secretary could lose the right to decide the minimum period youngsters guilty of serious crimes spend in custody.

The European Commission of Human Rights in Strasbourg cleared the way for a claim by Robert Thompson and Jon Venables that the system, in trying them like adults, amid massive publicity, had been unfair.

After a private hearing, the commission ruled there was a prima facie case that both their trial and sentencing violated the European Convention on Human Rights.

Palace to limit royal titles

FEWER royal children will in future be allowed to adopt the title HRH, Buckingham Palace has agreed in response to pressure from Downing Street for a modernised "People's Monarchy", *write Owen Bowcott and Ewen MacAskill.*

Only the children of the sovereign, and those of the heir to the throne, will be allowed to call themselves His or Her Royal Highness.

But political demands for those who have already adopted such royal epithets — such as the Duchess of York's young children, HRH Princess Beatrice and HRH Princess Eugenie — to be stripped of the honour are being resisted.

News of the proposed changes came on the day that the Queen ruled that the Union Flag should be flown at the top of the Buckingham Palace masthead when she is not in residence. During Diana's funeral, the Union Flag was flown for the first time at half-mast from the palace.

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Kosovo needs autonomy

HOUSES set alight and civilians shot dead by Serbian security forces make a horribly familiar picture: is this the start of the next round of ethnic warfare in former Yugoslavia? If so, it is not for lack of warning. The suggestion that the next flashpoint could come in Kosovo, where the Albanian people has suffered oppression for years, has been made repeatedly since the Dayton agreement brought peace of a sort to Bosnia. The only surprise is how long the patience of the majority population in Kosovo has endured.

The violence in and around the capital of Pristina has blunted the diplomatic thrust of British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook's mission to Sarajevo, Banja Luka and Belgrade on behalf of the European Union. This was intended to strike a cautiously hopeful note, giving encouragement to the new and relatively more moderate leadership of the Bosnian Serbs. But in Belgrade Mr Cook was unable to deliver any bouquets to President Slobodan Milosevic. Instead his meeting was absorbed by the Kosovo question, and what was called a tough message that Britain "will not stand idly by" — whatever that may mean. The United States has also joined in the international pressure with a similarly coded warning from its Bosnia envoy, Robert Gelbard, that Washington will use "every appropriate tool" to deal with Serbia if Kosovo ignites.

Will such warnings have much or indeed any effect? The root problem so far has been the assumption that what happens in Bosnia can be separated from what happens in Serbia — of which Kosovo is an unhappy part. Mr Milosevic has been appeased in the belief that he helped in some measure to improve matters in Bosnia. Perhaps he did. But only after too many months and years during which the international community gave him the benefit of the doubt. Similar procrastination over Kosovo will be just as damaging and probably more so. A Kosovo conflagration will very soon destabilise Macedonia, where relations between the government and its Albanian minority are already very edgy. Bulgaria and Greece both have potential stakes in the outcome. It will also place the Albanian government, however reluctant to become involved — and facing its own problems of unrest — under huge internal pressure.

The six-nation Contact Group which met in London this week to discuss Kosovo must send an unambiguous message to Mr Milosevic and take clear and decisive steps. It should press for the indefinite renewal of mandate for the United Nations forces on the Macedonian border with Serbia. Any improvement of relations with Mr Milosevic must be tied unambiguously to progress in negotiations with the majority people of Kosovo, for which the Contact Group should offer its good offices. A real measure of autonomy remains the only solution, but as more Albanians take to arms in anger and despair, it will not be available for much longer.

Boss Zhu takes over

WHERE IS China heading? The National People's Congress (NPC) in Beijing focuses attention on the world's biggest question — and the hardest one to answer. The new prime minister, Zhu Rongji, will offer an economic New Deal in the face of an unemployment threat as serious as that of the pre-war depression. Mr Zhu has solved one crisis — the inflationary surge of 1993. He takes over with the reputation of being a real Boss who can make the bureaucracy budge. If he gets it right, the outside world will heave a sigh of relief — except for those who believe that "getting it right" should include real improvements in China's human rights. But the result of getting it wrong, everyone agrees, could dwarf all current difficulties in Asia and even past Soviet upheavals.

China's economic problems — and possibilities — have long provided a rationale for playing down human rights. The agenda is beginning to shift: on Monday, a China Daily commentary did not deny the right of foreign countries to express their concern: it argued instead that this should be achieved by dialogue — as the British-led European Union is proposing to do — rather than by "confrontation", as it accuses the United States of doing. This is an illusory difference because all governments put strategic and economic relations with China ahead of human rights. Bill Clinton will be visiting Beijing as readily as Tony Blair. The only difference is that US public and congressional opinion demands more lip service paid to moral issues. It is not a question of isolating China, but of striking the right balance: the real danger in recent times has been appeasement.

The British Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, believes that dialogue — or "engagement" — is beginning to pay off. But it only produces tiny dividends such as the news, garnered this week by the Austrian vice-president in Lhasa, that the boy Panchen Lama — recognised by the Dalai Lama and denounced by Beijing — is living in a remote Tibetan village. The release of the dissident Wei Jingsheng last November was a bigger step. Mr Cook was expected to meet him this week, tactfully after rather than before the Foreign Secretary's recent visit to Beijing. But the real human rights issues concern thousands of Chinese, unknown except to the human rights group Amnesty International, whose voices are stifled.

Mr Zhu has clean hands from the past — unlike others still in the leadership. Other younger, more open-minded, Chinese officials, managers and intellectuals are waiting their turn who may eventually take China further forward. But easing the pressure helps the party diehards, not them. There is nothing wrong with dialogue — but it must not muffle criticism.

Asia's crisis is a warning

THE DUST may be settling on the Asian financial collapse, but the instabilities in world financial markets — which gave rise to the crisis — are still lying in wait for their next victim. The question is whether anything can be done about it or whether globalisation's huge financial flows have escaped forever from the surveillance of sovereign states. There are now encouraging signs that at the very least the Asian crisis has persuaded world leaders that something must be done, even if they can't agree what that something is. Last week Alan Greenspan, chairman of the United States Federal Reserve, said that the world financial system needed to be altered "to fit the needs of the new global environment". This week Robert Rubin, the US treasury secretary, said that an intensive effort was under way to overhaul "the architecture of the global financial system" to bring institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank up to date.

What can be done? The Asian crisis was precipitated by a tidal wave of short-term money leaving the area on a scale unjustified by the — manageable — economic problems of the region. It was a classic example of market overreaction. This time it was contained by a fire brigade action by the IMF. But what about next time, and the time after that? George Soros, the financier-philanthropist who knows more about global markets than most, has frequently warned of the danger of a world financial meltdown. He urges the establishment of a sister body to the IMF which would set limits on loans and guarantee them up to that limit. There is already an underused function of the World Bank which could do just that. The British Chancellor, Gordon Brown, who is the current chairman of the Group of Seven, wants more transparency in financial matters. He believes that if more countries follow his recent lead in revealing true foreign exchange positions, it would inject an air of reality into international affairs. If this could evolve into something like a global Maastricht code, in which the leading countries agreed on core disciplines of fiscal and monetary policy robustly policed by the IMF, then a macro-economic convergence might take place.

The problem is so potentially explosive that the G7 ought at least to discuss more radical solutions, such as the imposition of a small tax on every international currency transaction. We all know the difficulties, not least that it needs only one country not to sign up to it for it to fail. But the difficulty of implementation shouldn't prevent countries from at least trying to find a workable solution. The same applies to co-ordinated currency intervention when the major players pool their resources to intervene in the markets in order to correct currencies that have got hopelessly out of line. The emergence of a new monetary bloc in Europe, with its own currency, ought to make it easier to build a yen-dollar-euro zone of stability.

Weighed down by an information overload

Martin Woollacott

IT IS surely ominous that the Paris Metro is to be wired so that passengers can use their portable phones. Soon it will not be possible to shelter from the blizzard of public and private messages even if you are in a hole in the ground.

There is something obsessive about the effort to ensure that there should be no place where modern communications are at a disadvantage, nowhere any longer remote or isolated. Being "cut-off" is heresy in the age of instantaneity. The beeping and the babble are the sounds of our times.

What happens when the portable phone enters the scene is that the difference between the public and private is blurred in several ways. People hooked up up to their own private connections are no longer walking in the street, wandering in the park, or driving along the road in the way that others are. The speaker is not with us, nor we with him. The momentary community of those in the same place or situation is shattered by these connections, which place some persons in two places at once and no two individuals in the same two places. Above all, the area in space and time in which there is a respite from the continual sending and receiving of messages, already under siege, shrinks even further.

How different a scene this is from the anxious drinkers around the radio in a second world war pub, or the squashed group of family and friends on the sofa in front of early television soccer, or the crackly phone call, once a year, from Britain to Australia. Then we were in a world of far fewer messages, most of them communally rather than individually experienced. Yet there is a contradictory effect: we may be irritated by being forced to listen to private messages, but the experience adds to the notion that we have a right to listen to any private message when it is sufficiently interesting or dramatic. Andy Warhol said that the telephone was "the most intimate and exclusive of all media", but that was before the portable.

Life, then, is indeed a passing show. When a dying climber phones his wife from the top of Mount Everest, or a prince talks to his mistress, people expect to learn about at least certain portions of the conversation. When the Mir space station threatens to spin out of control, people think they should be able to watch and listen, live for preference.

The newness of the message-dominated society, can, it is true, be overdone. Contemporaries tussled with the changes brought about by the penny post, the illustrated press, and the telephone, just as they did later with radio, film and television, and just as we are doing with our "information revolution". Sir Edward Grey, British foreign secretary when the first world war broke out, believed that the "Penny Post had already begun to make a change adverse to reading by consuming a vast amount of time in correspondence that was unnecessary, trivial, or irksome". But he kept his strongest ire for the telephone: "The telephone is a deadly disadvantage; it minces time into fragments, and frays the spirit". As for that blurring of the public and private that makes people feel that the private lives and messages, of others are their property as entertainment, Kierkegaard defined the phenomenon succinctly when he wrote that "this gallery . . . is on the look-out for distraction and soon abandons itself to the idea that everything that anyone does is done in order to give it, the public, something to gossip about".

The novel characteristics of the information revolution are said to be the merging of different forms of message-sending through the union of the computer, telephone and television, the sheer volume of messages zooming about, and their extreme differentiation. Bill Gates is a less popular figure than he used to be because Microsoft has been cavalier with its competitors, with government and courts trying to ensure fair competition. But it may also be that Gates is suffering from the reactions of a public beginning to weary of the sheer number of messages; and of their mind-battering diversity. One figure quoted is of 1,600 images per minute per channel on American television in the late eighties, and to this you can add radio at 100 words a minute, newspapers at 150,000 words a day, and advertising messages at 1,600 a day, as well as the growing number of personal messages. The web has the potential for adding hundreds of thousands more.

Early thinkers on the mass media warned that governments or corporations would dominate public opinion directly, which of course they do, and it is an idea that still shapes attitudes to men like Gates and Murdoch. But the new reality has also turned out to be a multiplicity of very different messages received and rejected by a multiplicity of individuals. It is a kind of endlessly stormy weather of messages, swirling unpredictably this way and that, into which ordinary people shout their own little tales. If there is a dominant "message of messages" it is of the unavoidably fragmentary, fractured, and confused nature of communication.

MORE may not necessarily mean worse, but it does mean more. The press of messages squeezes the time available for those messages from the past that come from reading, as Sir Edward was already pointing out nearly a century ago, media squeezing out media. And it also squeezes the time in which we receive and deliver messages face to face, as against the time in which the media shape our existence.

Mark Twain put his witty finger on the difference between face-to-face encounters and modern messages in his story of being on the point of admonishing a pugnacious acquaintance who he felt had misunderstood a work of art. "I came near to bursting out and saying he had no more appreciation of it than a jackass — in fact, I had it right on my tongue but did not say it, knowing there was no hurry and I could say it just as well some other time, over the telephone." The telephone, like other media, distances us from the reality of other people. Perhaps it is of some comfort that one of its aspects, if correctly handled, is a certain immunity from being punched in the face.

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Russia looms large in Ukrainian politics

Natalie Nougayrède in Kiev

THE Ukrainian president, Leonid Kuchma, hopes that the 10-year economic co-operation agreement he signed with the Russian president, Boris Yeltsin, in Moscow on February 27 will bolster his chances of securing a second term at the presidential election in 1999. That prospect has already caused increased infighting between leaders of the various political and financial factions in Kiev.

In January Yeltsin stated publicly that he hoped to see Kuchma re-elected. In 1994 Kuchma, once head of a Soviet rocket factory, was elected president on a pro-Russian platform. But he subsequently distanced himself from Moscow.

The Ukrainian opposition, though far from unified, is beginning to organise itself. Leading the leftwing forces is Alexander Moroz, president of the parliament, which is dominated by communists, socialists and agrarians. Another faction is centred on the Unified Social Democratic party, led by a former KGB boss, Yevhen Marchuk, and now supported by a former president, the nationalist Leonid Kravchuk.

The small centrist anti-Kuchma party Hromada (Together), founded by Pavel Lazarenko — a powerful gas baron who was sacked from the post of prime minister — has been fast gathering support in recent months. In 1995 the company controlled by Lazarenko, Unified Energy System, obtained a large slice of the market for Russian gas in Ukraine.

Lazarenko works hand in hand with the Russian gas giant Gazprom, which has close ties with the Russian prime minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin. The transit revenues that Kiev derives from Russian gas being piped through Ukraine are put at $3 billion, according to one expert who suspects that little of that money ends up in state coffers.

Kuchma and Lazarenko have been firing off accusations of corruption at each other. "Kuchma has agreed to snuggle up to the Russians," says a Western observer in Kiev. "But in return he's asked Chernomyrdin to rein in Lazarenko's presidential ambitions."

The country is still in the middle of a serious economic crisis, even though the decline in GDP has slowed (from -10 per cent in 1996 to -3 per cent in 1997). Ukraine has been criticised for its voluminous red tape, which has hindered reform and privatisation. The budget deficit careered out of control in 1997. The black economy reportedly accounts for about 50 per cent of all activity. Direct inward investment is low: it has totalled about $2 billion since 1991.

"The government has lost control of spending," says a Western economist, "chiefly because regions and cities are becoming increasingly autonomous."

Observers expect the battle between the various Ukrainian factions to affect government plans to privatise three leading enterprises this year: the power company Donbass Energo, the telecom company Ukrtelecom, and Ukraine National Airlines.

The most powerful political and financial groups, which are divided among themselves, are based in the eastern region of Dnepropetrovsk, where Kuchma, his prime minister Valery Pustovoitenko, and Lazarenko were born.

It is also a Russian-speaking industrial region whose economy is particularly well integrated with that of neighbouring Russia, and which stands to gain most from the improved trade relations with Moscow provided for in the agreement just signed.

Following, like Yeltsin, the old "divide and rule" precept, Kuchma blows hot and cold with his entourage and government. But unlike his Russian counterpart, he cannot constitutionally govern by decree without running into serious obstruction from parliament.

This separation of powers makes some analysts argue that Ukraine is more democratic than Russia. Others point out that if the opposition were to win at the polls, Kuchma might be tempted to dissolve parliament and give the Kiev regime more teeth.

His rapprochement with Moscow may alienate those who vote for the nationalist party Rukh (Movement), which, according to polls, should get the second-highest number of votes, after the communists, at the May 29 general election.

But relations between Kuchma's National Democratic party and the Rukh's leader, Viacheslav Chornovil, have greatly improved since Rukh came to power in two Ukrainian regions.

As for the communists, Kuchma cannot realistically expect to win votes by casting them in the role of bogeymen The communists are divided over the merits of "going back" to a Soviet-style regime, and many of them want Ukraine to remain independent.

But in Kiev, as in Moscow, with political and business groups colluding with each other, ideological debate was replaced quite some time ago by jockeying for economic influence.

(March 1-2)



The Ukrainian president, Leonid Kuchma, at a wreath laying ceremony during his visit to Moscow last month PHOTO: YURI KADOBNOV

Ally accuses Pinochet in murder case

Eduardo Olivares in Santiago

JUST as he is about to retire from the Chilean army, which he headed for 25 years, General Augusto Pinochet has been accused of having a hand in the murder of Orlando Letelier, who was killed with his secretary in a 1976 bomb attack in Washington. Letelier had been foreign minister in the government of President Salvador Allende, which was overthrown by Pinochet in 1973.

The charge is no ordinary one: it has come from General Manuel Contreras, who headed the secret services during the military dictatorship and was therefore under the direct orders of Pinochet.

Following the bomb attack, investigators in the United States pointed the finger of suspicion at the Chilean military regime's secret police, the Dina.

In 1995, by which time Chile was a democracy again, Contreras was given a seven-year prison sentence. He is now appealing against that sentence.

From jail, Contreras said that he had always "acted in accordance with the instructions he received from the president", in other words Pinochet. "Pinochet alone, as the Dina's senior authority, could order the missions that were carried out. I always strictly obeyed orders."

Contreras made this claim in the course of being questioned during investigations leading up to his trial. His statement, which had never been made public, has just been revealed by the Madrid daily El Pais. It has been passed on to the Spanish magistrate, Manuel Garcia-Castellon, who is examining a complaint lodged against Pinochet in Madrid for genocide and terrorism.

Last week, the authenticity of Contreras's remarks was confirmed both by his son, Manuel, and by his lawyer. The development could prove highly embarrassing, as the Dina also stands accused of having organised the 1974 murder in Argentina of General Carlos Prats, Pinochet's predecessor as army chief, who had remained loyal to Allende's elected government.

Manuel Contreras junior said that his father felt he had been "abandoned by his peers and by all the businessmen who grew rich thanks to the military regime and who now pretend not to know him".

What could turn out to be a settling of scores between former pillars of the military regime comes at a time when Pinochet, in accordance with the constitutional provisions he himself imposed before handing over power in 1990, is due to become a life senator on March 11.

Several political parties and groups have made it clear that they intend to oppose the arrival in the senate of "the man whose first act as dictator was to close down parliament".

(March 1-2)

France trains African peace-keeping force

Thomas Sotinel in Bakel

IN THE region of Bakel, a town near Senegal's border with Mauritania and Mali, the "Guidimakha 98" manoeuvres — aimed at developing a "new concept of peace-keeping in Africa" — were entering their final phase. French state-of-the-art radar and air guidance systems contrasted absurdly with the single-engined aircraft of the Senegalese air force.

Mauritanian military engineers were building a metal raft designed to take troops and light armoured vehicles across the Senegal river. An officer from a non-French-speaking African country, an observer, was sceptical: "The French say they want the Africans to take charge of peace-keeping themselves, but here nothing can be done without the French."

Guidimakha 98 was nevertheless very much an African affair, Senegal, Mauritania and Mali formed a multinational peace-keeping battalion with the help of Portuguese-speaking Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, and English-speaking Ghana and Gambia, each of which sent a platoon.

The unit, called Recamp (Reinforcement of African Peace-keeping Capabilities), was supported mainly by French logistics with nominal participation by Britain and the United States. Guidimakha 98 mobilised 3,700 men, 30 aircraft and 700 vehicles.

The scenario was an intervention, within the framework of a United Nations mandate and with the consent of the belligerents, of an African multinational force in a country where government forces had clashed with rebels.

Once the exercise is over, the equipment that was needed to set up Recamp will remain in the Senegalese capital, Dakar, with a French marine light infantry battalion stationed there. It will be handed over to any future inter-African force once that has received a UN mandate.

The idea was spawned by one of the rare recent successes of France's Central Africa policy — its support for the Bangui Accords Monitoring Mission (Misab), an inter-African force that has kept the peace in the Central African Republic (CAR) since the spring of 1997.

Made up of contingents from Chad, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Mali and Gabon, Misab is under African command, but it is financed by France to the tune of $1.6 million a month, and benefits from the logistics of French troops still stationed on the continent.

Misab has, however, shown its limitations. The behaviour of its troops has not been beyond reproach. Their intervention in the CAR's capital, Bangui, in June 1997 left some 100 civilians dead. Misab was backed up by French logistics and "operational assistance" troops, which had already twice crushed rebels trying to oust the president, Ange-Félix Patassé.

Guidimakha 98 stressed the humanitarian side of peace-keeping. Ilunga Ngandu, representing the UN High Commission for Refugees, said he would like the UNHCR and Recamp troops to harmonise the way they registered refugees.

It remains to be seen whether France, which has just contributed $5.75 million to the operation, will be able to afford to bear most of the cost of actual interventions, whose political purpose may not always square with French aims in Africa.

The French defence minister, Alain Richard, who visited Bakel on February 28, said he hoped other Western countries would have "the will and the guts" to risk their soldiers' lives on African soil, as France had done.

This French involvement, although often frowned on in non-French-speaking Africa, does help to prevent an African regional power from dominating its neighbours. It is well known, for example, that the West-African force Ecomog, which has intervened in Liberia and Sierra Leone, serves Nigerian interests.

(March 3)



Manet's Le Chemin de Fer (1873), painted next to the Gare St-Lazare in Paris, is today considered to be one of his masterpieces. When it was first shown, in 1874, it was ridiculed

Past master of modernity

Philippe Dagen

THE woman has a puppy and an open book on her lap. She is staring back at someone who is staring at her, or perhaps she is just gazing into space, having left off reading for a moment. Seated on a wall with her back to some railings, she is wearing a blue dress with large white buttons and a black hat adorned with flowers. A black ribbon emphasises the roundness of her neck.

Next to her, with her back to us, is a little girl in a blue and white dress who is looking through the railings at something we cannot see because it is hidden by white smoke. The smoke and the track that can be seen through the railings suggest we are near a railway station. In the background there is a façade with two doors and a window. Placed on the wall next to the girl is a bunch of white grapes. No event is about to happen; no allegory can be detected.

The painting, Le Chemin de Fer (1873), is one of Edouard Manet's masterpieces. The property of the National Gallery in Washington, it is the centrepiece of an exemplary exhibition at the Musée d'Orsay in Paris that manages to be at once edifying, intriguing, attractive and moving. It commemorates no anniversary and obeys none of the constraints of fast cultural food.

Its aim is to explain how Manet worked, why he painted Le Chemin de Fer next to the Gare St-Lazare in Paris, and why Claude Monet, Berthe Morisot, Gustave Caillebotte and other lesser-known artists treated the same subject in the 1870s.

It is easy to guess what attracted them: the fast-expanding station and adjacent Place de l'Europe, its bridge of intersecting girders, the blocks of flats on either side of the railway cutting, and the nearby streets named after capital cities (Rue de St-Pétersbourg, Rue de Londres, Rue de Berlin) all helped to give the district an eminently modern aura.

Manet moved to a flat as close as possible to the bridge in 1872. At his huge premises on the ground floor of 4 Rue de St-Pétersbourg, he worked, received visitors and showed paintings of his that had been turned down by the Salon jury.

From his windows he could see the bridge, the railway lines and Rue Mosnier (now Rue de Berne). He painted that street several times — decked out with July 14 flags, being paved by navvies, cluttered with carriages and passers-by on a rainy day. In other words, he set himself up in premises from which he could most conveniently observe the customs of the modern metropolis.

His approach was deliberate, like that of Caillebotte, who lived nearby. They were painters of modern life, in the Baudelairean sense, and did not feel at home in the old quarters of central Paris.

It was all perfectly logical. The aim was to implement an exploratory method that combined pictorial experimentation with the discovery of new subjects. The Impressionism of Monet, Caillebotte, Morisot and Camille Pissarro was one of the end products of the method, which Manet was the first to put into practice.

They each arrived at their ends in different ways. The exhibition focuses on the little-discussed subject of how they went about their painting. In the case of Le Chemin de Fer, Manet first looked out of the window of a studio occupied by an artist friend, Alphonse Hirsch, on the other side of the tracks. From Hirsch's studio, Manet could see the front door and one of the windows of his own studio, visible behind the young woman. Yet he painted the picture in his own studio, not Hirsch's.

The strangely alluring Victorine Meurent, who had posed for him in the nude for Le Déjeuner sur l'Herbe and for Chanteuse de Rues (1862), and then for Jeune Dame en 1866, is the seated young woman in Le Chemin de Fer. The painting would therefore seem to be a synthesis of two ways of looking at the model: from nature and in the studio. Manet did not work on it in the open air, and the smoke and light effects were reconstructed from memory with admirable accuracy and skill.

Manet was an old hand at such tricks. One evening in 1862, he saw a woman come out of a louche café with her skirt hitched up and a guitar under her arm. He immediately asked her if she would pose for him in the same clothes and posture. She laughed and refused. Manet got Meurent to dress up like the unknown woman, gave her a guitar and painted La Chanteuse des Rues.

Caillebotte used the same technique in Sur le Pont de l'Europe and Rue de Paris; Temps de Pluie. He painted the pictures in his studio from drawings and sketches. They do not have the lightness of touch or artificial spontaneity of the Manet paintings.

The other approach was Monet's acrobatic, strenuous technique of painting from nature, which involved working at great speed and in difficult conditions. In 1877 he chose his spot — the Gare St-Lazare of course. He went from platform to platform, changing his viewpoint and moving closer to or farther from his subject as required. Of the 11 or 12 pictures Monet painted on the subject, he executed some on the spot; others he completed in the studio after having made a sketch directly on the canvas.

SOMEONE who saw him at work said: "He painted the departure of the locomotives with furious energy . . . hindered by their manoeuvres, he stood there, with his brush poised, like a hunter, looking out for the moment when he could dab the canvas."

The exhibition has brought together in one room almost the whole Monet series — which should be enough to ensure its success. We follow the movements of the painter as he tried to find the right viewpoint and to render the swirling steam, the light filtering through the glass roof, and the crowds of travellers.

Sometimes there is blazing sun, sometimes rain, sometimes mist — Monet varied the time of day as much as he did his compositions. He painted what Emile Zola described later, in La Bête Humaine (1889): "In the confused blur of carriages and locomotives that cluttered the railway lines, a large red signal stood out like a stain against the wan daylight."

What was needed to describe those confused movements, the glint of steel and the clouds of steam was a style that eschewed not only continuous lines (lines are blurred by movement and steam) but also the conventional model of chiaroscuro. That style was Impressionism.

(February 13)

"Manet, Monet, La Gare St-Lazare", Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Closed Monday. Until May 17

Paintings that provoked the contempt of the Salon

WHEN Manet's Le Chemin de Fer was shown at the 1874 Salon, it was greeted with sarcasm, and cartoonists satirised its composition, *writes Philippe Dagen*. They turned the bars of the railings into those of a prison or an asylum, and harped on the theme of madness that had so often been used to deride Manet.

In the Journal Amusant, beneath a sketch of the painting, the caption reads: "Two madwomen, suffering from incurable monomanetia, watch the carriages go by through the bars of their nut-house."

In his Revue Comique, Cham captioned his sketch of the two figures: "In prison because they have neglected the respect they owe the public. (It is only right.)" Lack of respect? The painting's title and what it showed were thought to be incompatible; the picture was sloppily painted, its composition incoherent, and its subject of no interest.

The caricatures are grouped in one showcase of the Musée d'Orsay exhibition. Not only do they not make us laugh today, but they leave a nasty taste in the mouth precisely because they are incomprehensible — as incomprehensible as the hatred the critics and the Salon jury directed at Manet.

One can understand, at a pinch, that paintings like Déjeuner sur l'Herbe or Olympia could have been found offensive. They showed real nudity and had nothing in common with the sleek nudes of the beloved great masters. They suggested desire, sexual appetite, the game of seduction, and the commerce of prostitution.

But what about an innocent painting like Le Chemin de Fer, which has no salacious overtones? Could it have been its exactness that made it unbearable? No, it was merely that Manet did not conform to the artistic norms of the time, as taught at the Beaux-Arts and championed by the Academy and the Salon jury.

As well as analysing the notion of modernity, the exhibition focuses on a more sombre chapter — refusal, and hatred of modernity. The 1874 Salon accepted Le Chemin de Fer, but turned down another key Manet painting, Bal Masqué à l'Opéra. In 1876, he entered L'Artiste and Le Linge, both of which were turned down.

This had a number of consequences. Manet decided to exhibit the paintings at his studio in the Rue de Saint-Pétersbourg. A lot was written about the show in the press, and crowds kept coming for two weeks.

Then the poet Stéphane Mallarmé published his booklet, Les Impressionistes et Edouard Manet. In it, he described Le Linge, in which "everywhere the luminous, transparent atmosphere comes to grips with the figures, the clothes and the foliage, apparently appropriating something of their substance and solidity, while the outlines, eroded by the sun, hidden and consumed by space, quiver, melt and evaporate into the surrounding air". His contemporaries were not ready for that kind of language.

There was a further scandal in 1877. Manet wanted the Salon to exhibit his Nana, the portrait of a *demi-mondaine* in front of her mirror. "Monsieur", dressed in black and carrying a cane, sits waiting for his belle to finish powdering her face.

The jury found the painting offensive and turned it down. Manet displayed the work in a fashion designer's window on the Boulevard des Capucines. According to Joris-Karl Huysmans, it prompted "indignant cries and laughter" from people in the street. They could not possibly imagine that such paintings would end up in museums, or that they would become, retrospectively, irrefutable representations of the period that refused them.

It is all the more important to recall such episodes today because a recent theory would have us believe that Manet was a revolutionary only in spite of himself, and that he would have liked nothing more than to belong to the Institute — if that had been possible. It has even been claimed that his painting and that of *pompier* artists belong to the same historical category. Nothing could be more erroneous.

In our era of theoretical quicksands and wishy-washy postmodernism, it needs to be repeated that there are irreducible differences and incompatibilities between artists, and that aesthetic ecumenism is no more than an elegant disguise for the most plodding conformism.

It was Manet who said, as though declaring war: "It has always been my ambition not to remain my old self, not to redo the following day what I did the previous day, to be constantly inspired by a new angle, and to try to sound a new note."

The exhibition contains another cruel example of how blind the public could be. In Monet's St-Lazare series, there is a painting called La Gare Saint-Lazare: les Signaux. It is remarkable for the stark simplicity of its composition. There is a grey disc in the middle, and others to the right. Apart from these discs on posts, all that can be seen are indistinct blocks of flats, ghostlike passersby and street lamps. Above the scene, Monet painted a shifting sky of stupendous beauty, with pink, blue and white highlights.

It is a work of great power that imposes itself on the spectator. It now belongs to Hanover Museum. In 1878, Caillebotte bought it from Monet, once again demonstrating what a keen eye he had. It later formed part of the bequest which, on his death in 1894, he left to the French nation. In 1896, the museum authorities rejected the painting on the grounds that it was unworthy of the national collections.

(February 13)

Le Monde
Directeur: Jean-Marie Colombani

The Washington Post

Kosovo Convulsions

EDITORIAL

THE LONG-FEARED "second Bosnia" may be igniting in Kosovo, a province of Serbia with a 90 percent ethnic Albanian majority. Kosovans have been demanding independence from a Belgrade government that has ruled repressively and resisted restoring even the lesser autonomy that it revoked in 1989. Now a collision of the "Greater Serbia" idea identified with the Serbian leader, Slobodan Milosevic, and a similarly nationalistic "Greater Albania" could draw in principals and region alike.

The current crisis was triggered by the killing of some Serbian policemen by the armed wing of the Albanian nationalist movement. The Serbian government responded with indiscriminate force and against innocents. The U.S. State Department criticized this response as "excessive," notwithstanding that Washington does not embrace separatist movements and agrees with Belgrade that the Kosovo Liberation Army is a terrorist group.

Milosevic, architect of the old Yugoslavia's disintegration, recently has sought to win Serbia's way back to international favor by helping the United States seat a new moderate Bosnian Serb government.

Washington rewarded him with air landing rights and some other forward-looking steps. The State Department was also supporting Belgrade's crimped plan for issue-by-issue negotiation, starting with education, of Serbian-Albanian differences.

But Serbia cannot expect escape from its isolation, nor the Albanians from their neglect, if others see either as responsible for an escalating war. Any political changes must be made at a table.

The sanctions against Serbia can't be made much tougher. But NATO military options need to be reviewed. Bill Clinton has reiterated George Bush's unspecific but resonant 1992 "Christmas warning" against Serbian aggression — a warning Milosevic cannot possibly find advantage in testing.

Tobacco Firms Must Open Secret Files

John Schwartz

THE TOBACCO industry must turn over more than 39,000 highly sensitive internal documents to Minnesota because they show a pattern of fraud and deception by cigarette companies, a judge has ruled.

One document cited by Ramsey County District Judge Kenneth Fitzpatrick refers to studies of smoking habits in children as young as 5.

The ruling in Minnesota's lawsuit against tobacco companies opens documents that passed between attorneys for the industry and their clients — the kind of information usually protected by attorney-client privilege, the privilege developed in Western legal tradition as a way to ensure that clients could speak freely with their legal advocates. But that protection can be lifted if a court finds that the attorneys were involved in a crime or fraud.

"The tobacco industry's 40-year game of hide and seek has come to an end," Minnesota Attorney General Humphrey H. Humphrey III said in a statement. Humphrey called the ruling "one of the most monumental public health decisions in American history" and called the documents "the tobacco industry's deepest, darkest secrets."

Fitzpatrick ruled that the companies "blatantly abused" the process of putting documents into categories for court review. He cited one document that had been categorized as a legal report for a Canadian subsidiary of British-American Tobacco Co. that actually was a report on youth marketing studies conducted for the company. That document states "the studies reported on youngsters' motivation for starting, their brand preferences, etc. as well as the starting behaviour of children as young as five years old." The studies, the document states, examine "young smokers' attitudes toward 'addiction' and contain multiple references to how many young smokers believe that they cannot become addicted, only to later discover, to their regret, that they are."

Fitzpatrick ordered that the special master in the case, Mark Gehan, reexamine documents in three categories that Gehan had previously not recommended releasing. He also unsealed Gehan's original report on the documents.

The report portrays a stark contrast between the industry's public pronouncements denying the health risks and addictiveness of smoking on the one hand and internal documents showing clear acknowledgement of both. One document, for instance, bears the title "Cigarette Smoking Termed Lethal Habit with Some Addiction Involved." Gehan also lists numerous documents that appear to detail methods used by the companies to manipulate nicotine over the decades.

Minnesota and its partner in the $1.77 billion consumer fraud case, Minnesota insurer Blue Cross and Blue Shield, had originally fought for the release of 250,000 documents protected by attorney-client privilege. The companies fought that, and more than 210,000 documents remain closed.

Internal industry documents have been the linchpin of the Minnesota case built by lead attorney Michael V. Ciresi, whose team has collected more than 30 million pages of documents and laid hundreds before jurors during six weeks of testimony.

Minnesota and Blue Cross filed the suit against the industry in 1994 to recoup tobacco-related medical costs and to force the industry to change its business practices. It is one of 41 states suing the industry. Cases brought by Mississippi, Florida and Texas have been settled for some $30 billion.

In a proposed national tobacco settlement being considered by Congress, the industry has offered to spend hundreds of billions of dollars and severely restrict marketing and advertising practices in return for protection from group lawsuits and punitive damages.

Humphrey predicted that the new documents would weaken the industry's hand in Washington: "When Congress and the American public see the pervasiveness of the fraud and conspiracy, they will demand action to truly protect kids without giving this outlaw industry the special immunity and protections it so desperately seeks."

Scott Williams, a spokesman for the industry on settlement issues, responded: "Mr. Humphrey continues to repeat the kind of confrontation that has achieved nothing in the past. There are many people, including the president, who are committed to finding a comprehensive solution to these long-standing issues. We invite Mr. Humphrey to join in this effort to achieve real and immediate progress."

Weizman telephones Netanyahu after his victory PHOTO: ANDRE DURAND

Weizman Wins Re-Election

Lee Hockstader in Jerusalem

EZER WEIZMAN, the cantankerous Israeli president whose quick-draw quips and outspoken politics have charmed most Israelis and alienated some, was re-elected to a second five-year term as head of state last week.

Despite the public opposition of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Weizman received an outright majority of votes in the 120-member parliament. He defeated a lackluster challenger, Shaul Amor of Netanyahu's right-wing Likud party, by 63 votes to 49.

Although the post of president in Israel is largely ceremonial, it provides a bully pulpit to influence public opinion. Few Israeli presidents have used that function so frequently, and with such apparent success, as the popular Weizman.

A former fighter pilot, Weizman, 73, was air force commander during Israel's victory in the Six-Day War of 1967. He is a charter member of Israel's Labor Party elite, and his uncle, Chaim Weizman, was the first president. He has made a point of visiting the family of nearly every Israeli killed either while serving in the armed forces or in terrorist attacks in his time in office.

Weizman has at different times crossed swords with both Netanyahu and Leah Rabin, widow of the slain prime minister Yitzhak Rabin. He infuriated Netanyahu by suggesting to Secretary of State Madeleine Albright that she "knock heads together" — including the prime minister's — to kick-start the Middle East process. Rabin was annoyed at Weizman's public recommendation that the peace process be put on hold after a number of terrorist attacks by Arabs against Israelis.

Puerto Rico: First Step to Statehood

Guy Gugliotta

IN A cliffhanger vote, the House overcame opposition from the left and right to approve historic legislation that could put Puerto Rico on the road to becoming the 51st state.

By a vote of 209 to 208, lawmakers approved the United States-Puerto Rico Political Status Act after 11 hours of often contentious debate. When the gavel sounded ending the seesaw vote count, pro-statehood Puerto Ricans seated in the gallery overlooking the House floor rose to their feet in a roar of triumph.

President Clinton strongly supports the House measure and hailed the vote as "a victory for democracy and against exclusion." But the narrow House victory could dim chances that the Senate will take it up. Rep. Gerald B.H. Solomon, R-New York, one of the chief opponents of the bill, said the bill "is dead in the Senate."

Regardless of the ultimate outcome, however, the legislation marked the first time in history Congress has approved a mechanism to clarify the status of Puerto Rico, a Caribbean island of 3.8 million people ceded to the United States a century ago as spoils of the Spanish-American War.

If the legislation becomes law, Puerto Rico would be required to hold a plebiscite by the end of the year to decide whether it wishes to become a state or an independent country, or remain an internally self-governing "commonwealth."

If commonwealth wins, nothing would happen until another plebiscite is held within 10 years. Should statehood or independence prevail, however, the president would be required to submit a 10-year transition plan by the middle of next year.

The bill provoked strong opposition from commonwealth advocates, mostly liberal Democrats, who charged that the legislation was skewed in favor of statehood: "By voting on this legislation, we are imposing statehood on Puerto Rico," said Puerto Rico-born Rep. Nydia M. Velazquez, D-New York. "This is not about self-determination."

But large numbers of conservatives also opposed the bill, charging that the American people were ill-prepared to deal with the possibility of making Puerto Rico a state. Only 43 of the House's 226 Republicans voted for the bill. All but 31 Democrats voted for it.

Judge Throws Out Miami Mayoral Results

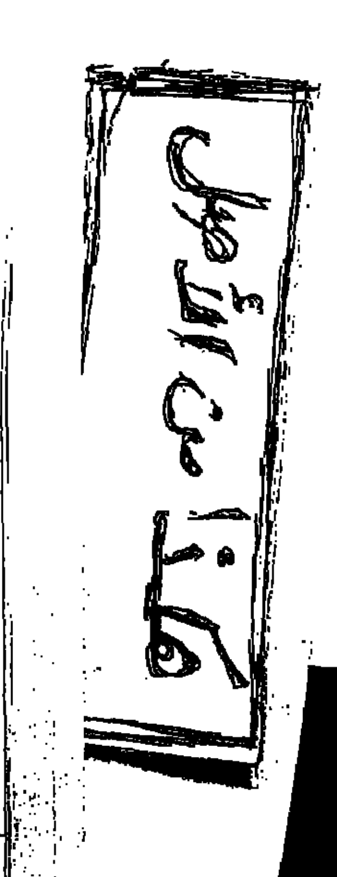
Donald P. Baker in Miami

A JUDGE has thrown out the results of Miami's bitterly contested mayoral race saying he found "clearly demonstrated fraud and abuse" in absentee balloting that lifted Xavier L. Suarez to victory in a runoff last November against incumbent Joe Carollo. There will be a rerun within 60 days.

Carollo, 42, came within 155 votes of winning a plurality in the November 4 regular election. But he lost the runoff on when Suarez captured two-thirds of the absentee ballots.

The judge said in his ruling that "witness after witness" testified to a catalog of abuses that included ballots cast by persons who did not ask for an absentee ballot, who did not live in the city or who did not know the person who supposedly witnessed their signatures. There was no evidence Suarez knew about or participated in the fraud.

Suarez, 48, has had a tumultuous four months in office, largely because of antics that earned him the nicknames "Mayor Loco" and "Hurricane Suarez." These included telling the Miami Herald that he would cancel municipal advertising unless reporters treated him more favorably.



GUARDIAN WEEKLY
March 15 1998

Colombian Military Called To Account

Laura Brooks in Bogota

STUNG by its worst defeat by leftist rebels in decades, the Colombian military has come under harsh attack by critics who say the army is demoralized, ill-equipped and unable to defend much of Colombia's countryside from the guerrillas.

"This is without a doubt the biggest defeat in the 35-year history of confrontation against the insurgency," said Alfredo Rangel, a security analyst who has worked for President Ernesto Samper. "Public opinion is extremely upset, and demoralized by what happened."

The stunning setback occurred in a days-long battle that began on March 2 when rebels of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, known by its Spanish initials FARC, ambushed an elite army unit near the remote village of El Billar on the Caguan River, in Caqueta, a southern state known for its vast coca plantations. The rebels said they killed 80, wounded 30 and took 43 prisoners in a fight that lasted 24 hours. The government has not released casualty figures but has disputed the rebels' count.

The rebels also said they seized 89 Galil automatic assault rifles, six mortars, eight multiple rocket-propelled grenade launchers and nine heavy machine guns, the Reuters news service reported.

Colombian air force planes responded with a bombing campaign that may have left civilians dead. And President Samper ordered war-weary troops to take the offensive against the rebels to avenge what he called a "hard blow."

Analysts said the defeat was significant not only because of the number of soldiers killed, but because the rebels overwhelmed a counterinsurgency unit known as the Mobile Brigade 3. "This is Colombia's elite fighting force," said Sergio Uribe, a political scientist at the University of the Andes in Bogota. "These are not conscripts; they are professional soldiers. They were outwitted and they were out-intelligenced."

The troops were conducting operations in one of Colombia's primary regions for growing coca, which is used to make cocaine, near an area which is believed to serve as the rebels' central command base, analysts said. The southern states of Guaviare and Caqueta are the principal base of operations for the rebels, who earn millions from drug traffickers by protecting their crops from anti-drug police.

The FARC and other insurgent groups have been fighting the Colombian government for more than three decades, with little hope of toppling it. But in recent months the rebels have shown an ability to inflict casualties in greater numbers than ever before on an army that critics say is demoralized, lacks equipment and is structurally unprepared to fight a guerrilla war.

In December, rebels ambushed soldiers manning a mountaintop army post in Patascoy, killing 10 men and kidnapping 18 others. In August 1996, FARC combatants attacked an army jungle outpost in Las Delicias, in southern Colombia, killing 28 troops and abducting 60 others, who were released 10 months later.

"The rebels want to intensify the conflict," Rangel said. "They are demonstrating a growing military capacity, while the army shows a weakness and vulnerability that is every day more serious."

In addition to the rebels, the army must contend with right-wing paramilitary groups, many of which initially flourished through cooperation with the army. These groups have been accused of violating human rights and assisting drug traffickers.

Although the army is firmly in control of Bogota, Medellin and other urban areas, it is unable to cover much of the countryside effectively, leaving remote, rural towns caught in often bloody conflict between rebels and the paramilitaries, according to analysts. With rebels present in as many as 50 percent of Colombia's villages, they have achieved a major political victory against the government in the last two years, analysts said.

"The rebels are advancing and obtaining their objective and are partially winning the confrontation," said Rangel. "The army is unable to contain the guerrillas and is temporarily losing the confrontation."

The military's performance last week prompted many Colombians to call for a complete reevaluation of military strategy, as well as resignations of top officials.

"The most common quality of military people is incompetence," said Armando Montenegro, president of the National Association of Financial Institutions. "So what you should do is remove the irresponsible ones and put in new ones."

Some Colombians said the defeat also underscores the severity of Colombia's fragile political situation. Samper and other government officials have been accused of accepting millions from drug traffickers in exchange for political favors, and the allegations — which have been denied uniformly — have left the government hobbled by internal divisions.

"It's another symptom of the Colombian crisis," Montenegro said. "There's no political order, there's no leadership in the country. We cannot rule out a very serious problem like institutional collapse in a few years if this thing gets worse."



Vote for me . . . Early returns predicted a landslide victory for President Samper's Liberal party in Colombia's congressional elections last Sunday, which were marked by a low turnout PHOTO PEDRO UGARTE

A Prescription to Pay for The Pill

OPINION
Ellen Goodman

NOW FOR a brief conversation about the pill. Yes, that one, the oral contraceptive that was dropped into midcentury American mores with such an impact that it was forever after known simply as The Pill. These days we have discovered a new irony on the prescription pad: The only pill your insurance may not pay for is the one we call "The" Pill.

This is the crux of the new conversation about women's health and wealth. How did we get to a place where we treat birth control differently from all other health care?

The Georgia Legislature recently took up a bill that would make insurance companies pay for contraceptives if they pay for other prescription drugs. At the hearing, insurance lobbyists outweighed women's health advocates 3-to-1 and the bill was shuttled back to subcommittee. But this is an issue cropping up throughout the U.S.

It's become a reality check for women combing through the fine print of their health policies. And it's become a sincerity check for politicians who like to "talk" about preventing unwanted pregnancies.

Right now 97 percent of all large group plans pay for prescription drugs, but only a third cover oral contraceptives. Meanwhile, 85 percent of insurance plans pay for sterilizations, but only half pay for any contraceptives at all.

Historically, women have had a hard time getting reproductive health care into the medical mainstream. Margaret Sanger, after all, had to smuggle diaphragms into this country in brandy bottles. Planned Parenthood began opening clinics because doctors wouldn't provide birth control.

Insurance companies have also treated reproductive health, shall we say, differently. It took an act of Congress a generation ago just to get all of them to cover pregnancy.

More to the historic point, insurers favor treatment over prevention. They have only gradually begun to cover such things as annual exams and Pap smears. They cover what is "medically necessary" and in companies where sisterhood is not yet powerful, many believe that birth control isn't necessary.

In fact, some insurers will pay for oral contraceptives to "treat a disease" but not to plan a family. This reminds me of the yesteryears when Catholic friends were allowed to take the pill to "regulate their periods." In the early '60s, this produced an epidemic of erratic periods.

But today the subject is bread and butter, as well as birth control. Women of reproductive age are paying 68 percent more than men in out-of-pocket expenses for health care. A big chunk goes to birth control. The pill alone can cost $24 a month. By comparison, it's estimated that birth control coverage would raise premiums $16 a year.

Some women are making hard choices between paying their bills and buying pills, says Sen. Olympia Snowe. She is pushing federal legislation introduced last year by a "dream team" of pro-choice and pro-life Republican and Democratic sponsors. The Equity in Prescription Insurance and Contraceptive Coverage Act — an EPICC moniker — may get a hearing this election year. Meanwhile, Virginia has become the first state to pass legislation. California is in the wings and Alaska and Connecticut are likely to follow.

This movement has given family planning advocates a nice political jolt. As Gloria Feldt, president of Planned Parenthood, says, "A public that is very tired of arguing about abortion is more than ready to help prevent the need for it through family planning."

It's also flushed out the anti-birth-control opposition. The American Life League is fighting the idea because it "ignores the tragic physical, emotional and spiritual side effects of all contraceptives."

As for the insurance companies? Half of all the pregnancies in Georgia are unintended. Insurers may hate mandates, but why not volunteer? The pill costs about $300 a year; one birth costs about $4,000. You do the math.

Hard Truths About My Lai Emerge

David Montgomery

THIRTY years ago, Hugh C. Thompson Jr. and Lawrence Colburn received medals for heroism under enemy fire at a little hamlet in Vietnam called My Lai. Last weekend, the Army corrected an oversight. For there was no enemy that March morning in My Lai. Or rather, the enemy was us.

During a ceremony at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington the two comrades were awarded the Army's highest medal for bravery not involving conflict with an enemy.

The medals were accompanied by brutally frank citations about what really happened at My Lai on March 16, 1968 — about "the unlawful massacre of noncombatants by American forces" and about "fleeing Vietnamese civilians and pursuing American ground troops" who were bent on "murder."

Several hundred civilians — mostly women, children and old men — were killed by Lt. William L. Calley Jr. and his troops. Eventually the atrocity was exposed, Calley was convicted of murder, and the Army began a painful self-examination to determine how its soldiers could go so wrong.

The story the Army never formally acknowledged until last weekend is how Thompson, Colburn and a third man, Glenn U. Andreotta, who was later killed in action, stopped the My Lai massacre before more people died.

On that morning in Quang Ngai Province, Thompson was the 24-year-old pilot of a combat helicopter. Colburn was his gunner, Andreotta his crew chief. Their mission was to draw enemy fire in support of troops maneuvering on the ground.

Instead they found U.S. soldiers firing on civilians. Thompson spotted some women and children cowering in a bunker. He put the chopper down between them and some advancing American soldiers.

"Can you get [the civilians] out?" Thompson recalls saying to one of the soldiers.

"With a hand grenade," he replied.

Thompson called in another helicopter to evacuate the 10 civilians. It took two trips. Thompson, Colburn and Andreotta provided cover, in case their fellow Americans started shooting. Then Thompson and his crew lifted off and set down again near a ditch with bodies, looking for survivors.

Thompson reported what they saw to his commanding officer, who called off all action in the sector, effectively ending the killing, Ackerman said.

The full story of My Lai did not come out for more than a year. Army officers initially tried to cover it up. Journalists have interviewed Thompson and told his story over the years, but in Army records, he was, until last weekend, still recognized for saving the civilians from the Viet Cong.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
March 15 1998

Armenians Disappointed by Freedom

Daniel Williams in Yerevan

WITH THE collapse of the Soviet Union, this little corner of the Caucasus won long-sought independence. Everyone dreamed of democracy. The country had friends in Washington. Could prosperity be far behind? Armenia even won a little war along the way to puff up its pride.

But almost all has turned sour. Independence brought not the march of democracy but a stumble toward autocracy. The last presidential elections were widely regarded as fraudulent and, in any case, the winner was recently deposed in what Armenians refer to as a velvet coup.

Victory in the war with neighboring Azerbaijan looks impermanent. That is particularly alarming because the cost of the conflict was counted not only in lives but also in a crippled economy. Even when compared to other hard-pressed republics of the former Soviet Union, Armenia stands out as a loser.

With new presidential elections scheduled for next week, the country is fast approaching a crossroads. "We had an illusion of greatness and now we are climbing down from the dream," said sociologist Lyudmilla Harutyunyan. "Now everyone sees that there must be change and some measure of realism."

The central issue of the campaign is the fate of Nagorno-Karabakh, the small, mountainous, ethnic Armenian enclave that Armenia won from Azerbaijan in a six-year war. Armenians are now debating whether possession of Nagorno-Karabakh stands in the way of Armenia's overall well-being.

Russian-supplied arms and a superior officer corps gave Armenia the victory there. In an elaborate fiction, Nagorno-Karabakh declared itself an independent republic. A cease-fire was arranged in 1994.

Azerbaijan refuses to accept the outcome, and time seems to be on its side. Armenia is weakening. Its borders with Turkey and Azerbaijan are closed, and other outlets, through Iran and Georgia, are tenuous. Soviet-era factories remain shut and unemployment is estimated at 45 percent. A country born to attract a far-flung diaspora is losing population through emigration and a low birth rate.

Azerbaijan, on the other hand, is flush with oil. Lobbyists in Washington promote its cause in Congress. At some point, the combination of wealth and influence may undo the battlefield result, some Armenians fear.

Prominent among the doubters was Levon Ter-Petrossian, the ousted president. Last November, he wrote a controversial essay in which he pressed for compromise as an alternative to further war. "Let us not be preoccupied with self-deception. . . . On the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh, we have no allies," he wrote. "Our only ally is to reject adventurism."

Unfortunately for Ter-Petrossian, he lacked the political backing to present such a stark choice. His 1996 election was marred by fraud, and he became remote and dictatorial in the months since. A few phone calls from the defense and interior ministries were enough to send him packing; he resigned early last month. "Certain power bodies you all know demand my resignation," he said, using an old Soviet euphemism for the police and army.

Ter-Petrossian's sin was acceptance of a step-by-step approach to resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Under a formula proposed by the "Minsk group" of negotiators, in which the United States plays a lead role, Armenia would surrender some buffer zones to Azerbaijan and allow refugees to go home, while international peacekeepers would be deployed in Nagorno-Karabakh. Talks on the final status of Nagorno-Karabakh would be put off.

Ter-Petrossian's shift toward compromise grew out of persistent hardship in Armenia. Yerevan, the capital, shows the signs of economic depression. Few businesses are opening, and none of the fresh glitter of new capitalism livens the streets. Building facades are unpainted, youths idle, services lacking.

The scene is an improvement over 1993 and 1994, when electricity was cut off and residents burned furniture and books for heat, but there is a feeling the country is going nowhere.

Meanwhile, Armenia is losing out in the regional oil sweepstakes. It would have been a natural route for a pipeline from Azerbaijan. The pipeline, and revenue from it, are now likely to go to Georgia. The border with Turkey, regarded as a natural trading partner, is closed in solidarity with Azerbaijan.

"Never have the stakes in Nagorno-Karabakh been clearer," said Vartan Oskanian, the foreign minister.

Opponents of compromise see in such comments the outlines of a sellout. They argue that the sacrifices already made preclude rather than invite a change of heart. Nagorno-Karabakh officials reject the step-by-step approach. They say that a solution must come as a package deal, including an agreement about the final status of the enclave.

Acting President Robert Kocharian, the favorite to win next week's election, says he prefers a package deal. Kocharian embodies the tangled fates of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. He is a native of the breakaway region, and was its president until last year, when Ter-Petrossian named him prime minister. He is running for president despite a rule that candidates must have resided in Armenia 10 years.

Emotions over Nagorno-Karabakh seem to be a legacy of Armenia's tragic 20th century history. The 1915 massacre of a million Armenians at the hands of Turks forms the psychological landscape of Armenian identity. Violence against Armenians in parts of Azerbaijan in the 1980s revived old fears. Having triumphed on the battlefield, some Armenians are reluctant to surrender now.

"This war gave us self-esteem," said Harutyunyan, the sociologist. "The 20th century started off with humiliation; now we've won a war. Maybe it's emotional . . . but this is a feeling that anyone who compromises will have to deal with."

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The Boy Who Would Be President

T.H. Watkins

T.R.: THE LAST ROMANTIC
By H.W. Brands
Basic Books. 897 pp. $35

THERE once was a bumptious, crafty, driven, bloody-minded, and bellicose overgrown child who happened to be president of these United States. He was infatuated with war, wrote some lively histories, was perhaps happiest when hunting down and killing large wild things, devoted himself whole-souled to the paranoid style in politics, and was perfectly capable of imagining himself the appointed messenger of God Almighty.

He also challenged corporate villainy and his own (Republican) party's implicit support of same, identified with (and considered himself the savior of) common folk, energized the Progressive movement, made the protection of consumers and the conservation of natural resources national priorities for the first time in our history, and, above all, vastly expanded the role of the federal government in the affairs of the nation and the world, his dream of American hegemony putting the United States in the business of global politics on a scale never dreamed of by his predecessors.

That, at least, is the portrait of Theodore Roosevelt that H.W. Brands gives us in this energetic and capacious biography. A good part of the life is told in T.R.'s own words, for Brands has mined the prodigious treasure of letters, diaries and published writings of the man more assiduously than anyone else I can think of and uses the material generously throughout. This tactic tends to narrow the point of view to that of T.R. himself, and while the author is careful to point out his subject's errors, prejudices and excesses, it sometimes gives the book a certain claustrophobic quality and limits what the author can do in the way of providing context. It is far more a "life" than it is a "life and times."

But such a life. Even T.R.'s pre-presidential years constitute one of the great stories in American history, as David McCullough's Mornings On Horseback and Edmund Morris's The Rise Of Theodore Roosevelt both demonstrated handsomely. Brands adds little new to their work, perhaps — except for all that Rooseveltian commentary — but the story easily bears repeating, and Brands does it well.

T.R. was born in New York City in 1858 to privilege, if not staggering wealth, in a family not so much dysfunctional as diseased. Young "Teedie" himself suffered from various maladies, including asthma, as did one of his sisters. Another sister had a spine warped by a congenital disorder. His younger brother, Elliott (father of Eleanor Roosevelt, who would marry Theodore's distant cousin Franklin), was an alcoholic who would die of the disease. His much-loved father succumbed to bowel cancer in 1878, leaving Roosevelt so bereft, Brands argues, that it forever stunted his emotional growth. So did the death of his young wife and his mother within hours of each other on Valentine's Day six years later, leaving him with an infant daughter, Alice, whom he could never bring himself to fully love, and yet another emotional void he could never fill.

He tried. He already had taken up part-time ranching in North Dakota, had written well-received histories, biographies, and hunting stories, and had begun a term in the New York State Assembly, where a colleague described him as "a brilliant madman born a hundred years too soon." Then he began digging a Panama Canal-sized career that in swift succession included stints as U.S. Civil Service commissioner, New York City police commissioner, and assistant secretary of the Navy. He remarried and sired four more children. He rose to stardom in the Spanish-American War of 1898 and became governor of New York. In 1896 he joined the Republican ticket as William McKinley's running mate, in spite of Mark Hanna's famously anguished cry: "Don't any of you realize that there's only one life between that madman and the presidency?" And sure enough, in 1901, after an assassin put a bullet through McKinley's innards, the madman became president.

Brands outlines with suitable vigor the most important aspects of T.R.'s presidential years — his attempts to bring Japan into the company of the other world powers, his broadening of the Monroe Doctrine to embrace Central and South America, the acquisition of the rights to build the Panama Canal, the creation of the U.S. Forest Service and the expansion of the National Forest System, regulation of the meatpacking industry and the railroads, antitrust efforts, and other elements of Roosevelt's "Square Deal." But space in an already long book constrains the author, and for a more comprehensive modern interpretation of T.R.'s presidency we probably will have to await the second volume of Edmund Morris's ongoing biography. The same can be said for T.R.'s post-presidential career, including the noisy attempt at a third-party election in 1912.

Still, what Brands gives us of these years is as compellingly told as the rest, and it seems likely that T.R. will stand for some time as the standard one-volume life, a life the author clearly has enjoyed writing — which brings me to a complaint: If anything, he has had a little too much fun. He is given to psychologizing that sometimes is on the mark but sometimes strains credibility. Brands also uses modern jargon jarringly from time to time. His editor should have beaten most of this out of the text.

From Miss to Ms.

Blair Campbell

GLORIA STEINEM
Her Passions, Politics, and Mystique
By Sydney Ladensohn Stern
Birch Lane. 501 pp. $27.50

"IN BIOGRAPHY, stick with the dead," jokes Sydney Ladensohn Stern in the epilogue of her new book on the life of Gloria Steinem. Stern's subject seems to feel the same way about biographers. In exchange for granting almost 60 hours of interviews, Steinem got to take a look at Stern's completed manuscript. She returned it with numerous deletions, altered quotations, and entire sections rewritten, and when early review copies of the book were released with little evidence of her changes, Steinem sent sections of the manuscript to friends who in turn called Stern and made suggestions of their own. Stern had accepted Steinem's comments where she felt they clarified certain facts or offered new material, but resisted giving in to the phenomenon she calls "history according to Gloria." The result is a richly detailed, highly favorable portrait of the famous feminist that bares just enough of Steinem's dark side to avoid being dismissed as a fan letter.

Gloria Steinem: Her Passions, Politics, And Mystique begins with the romance of Ruth Nuneviller and Leo Steinem at the University of Toledo in 1919. The couple married two years later and in 1934 their second daughter, Gloria, was born in Clarklake, Michigan. Ruth and Leo divorced in 1945, and, with older daughter Sue away at college, Ruth moved with her younger daughter into a rat-infested apartment in the house in Toledo where Ruth had grown up.

Despite a miserable home life Gloria Steinem is remembered by friends as having a normal and enjoyable high school existence. She moved to Washington D.C., where she finished up at Western High School in Georgetown. She was admitted to Smith College, where her sister had gone before her, with the help of strong recommendations from two of her teachers, and in 1952 she headed to Massachusetts for her freshman year. After graduation, she went to India on a scholarship, and by 1960 she had moved to New York City and landed her first job in journalism, working on Mad magazine creator Harvey Kurtzman's new humor title, Help. As she found her journalistic voice, Steinem became politically vocal as well, penning New York magazine's "City Politic" column and working tirelessly for George McGovern during his brief campaign for president in 1968.

Although Steinem resisted the feminist label for most of the 1960s, her support of liberal political causes, along with the progressive nature of her New York column, drew the attention of leaders in the women's movement. In 1969, she attended a feminist rally during which several women recounted the physical and emotional anguish they had endured while obtaining illegal abortions. Their stories had personal resonance — Steinem had gotten an abortion in London just prior to her post-college trip to India — and she suddenly saw herself "not only as an individual confronting problems but also as a member of an oppressed group." Steinem recalls the event as a turning point after which the feminist cause consumed her, and she began to tour the country, speaking out on behalf of women's rights. Over the next three years, she became a central figure in the movement, and in 1972 she launched the first issue of Ms., "a magazine for female human beings."



Gloria Steinem: Highly favorable portrait PHOTO: ROGER BAMBER

Stern seems more comfortable in the role of historian than biographer. As she discusses the feminist awakening of American women in general and Steinem in particular, the book gains momentum, and her writing — plodding and uninspired up to this point — improves dramatically. In the chapters dealing with Steinem's 1992 Revolution From Within: A Book Of Self-Esteem, Stern provides an evenhanded portrayal of the recovery movement, though arguing against the movement's tendency to blame all adult suffering on childhood trauma.

Ironically enough, Stern attributes every character flaw Steinem exhibits to her mother's mental problems and her father's wanderlust. Such amateurish attempts at psychoanalysis frequently interrupt the narrative; in a chapter on Steinem's life in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where she worked in 1959, Stern writes: "Although Gloria clung to a vision of herself as an outsider, it was a complicated outsiderness. She felt like an outsider, and at some level she wanted it that way." Stern suggests that Steinem's aversion to marriage stems from her childhood love of Louisa May Alcott, and she argues that only "possession by an alien force" could have made Steinem attempt to get pregnant, as Mort Zuckerman believed she did during their three-year relationship in the 1980s.

Described in publicity notes as "an ardent feminist and activist in the reproductive rights movement," Stern seems to have relished the task of researching a woman she clearly idolizes, but those readers seeking a thoughtful, unbiased account of Steinem's life will likely find the book too slanted.

Weathering The Storm

John Keene

TEMPEST RISING
By Diane McKinney-Whetstone
Morrow. 280 pp. $24

DIANE McKinney-Whetstone's first novel, Tumbling, appeared in 1996 to much praise: More than one reviewer noted the arrival of a skillful storyteller. A moving, finely drawn, socially grounded work, Tumbling was a bestseller and marked McKinney-Whetstone as a writer to follow. Her new novel, Tempest Rising, set in West Philadelphia in the early 1960s, is another work of considerable achievement, with a cast of characters and a story that linger in the mind well after one sets the book down.

Tempest Rising centers on Clarise and Finch and their three daughters, Shern, Victoria and Bliss. Fate has dealt them a tragic hand. Despite humble beginnings Finch has become a superlative cook and has pulled his family into the upper middle class. This is the Civil Rights era, a period of tremendous social tumult and transformation in which Clarise and Finch participate. Instead of remaining in segregated inner Philadelphia, they have relocated to the integrated near-suburbs, but this same growing freedom of movement and choice is killing Finch's catering business. He sets out early one morning to go crabbing, and drowns. It is not simply his death that causes the unraveling of the characters' lives, however, but the lifestyles leading up to it. Clarise, overmedicated and wracked with grief, ends up nearly severing her hands and is committed to an institution. Her aunts and uncles refuse to play by the rules and cannot get custody of her daughters. They are consequently shipped off to Mae's, a foster-care; and everything deteriorates from there on.

Ramona, Mae's grown daughter, does not appear until the second section, but she is the novel's central figure, the glue holding everything together. In Ramona, McKinney-Whetstone creates a character who is so vivid, believable and engaging that the reader can almost touch her as she moves through each scene. In the end, Ramona's emotional and psychological tempests sweep everyone else up and place them all back where they belong. Ramona's relationship with the girls, especially Shern and Victoria, whom she is forced to rear for a while, brings about one set of confrontations. Her heart-rending relationship with Mae brings about others, perhaps the most startling in the book. There is also Ramona's tempestuous and yet tender relationship with her boyfriend Tyrone and his father, Perry.

Tempest Rising is literally and figuratively a novel of storms, and McKinney-Whetstone has chosen her metaphor well. There is the series of interior storms that rise within the characters' heads, and there are the many stormy relationships occurring within their families. (At heart, this is a novel of families — of mothers and daughters, fathers and sons, relatives — taking place in a city that in many ways constitutes a family.) The novel's major calamity is a storm as well, a freezing snowstorm that blankets the city and suburbs as the story hurtles toward its climax.

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Darkness at the heart of privatisation

COMMENT
Will Hutton

AUCKLAND is the first city where it has happened, but it cannot be long before the experience is repeated in Britain. For the past three weeks the central district of a city of 1 million people has been totally without power. Apartment blocks have been evacuated. Business has ground to a halt. Bankruptcies and unemployment are growing. Normal life has been suspended. It could be more than a month before power is restored.

It's this kind of reality that rams home to ordinary people what otherwise exists only as a theory. Electricity is not a commodity like a designer dress where an interruption of supply poses no wider consequences; it is a precondition for successful modern life. If the owner of the power and distribution system fails to maintain supply, this is not just an issue for the shareholders of the enterprise. It is an issue for everyone.

This means electricity companies — like water, gas and rail companies — cannot be run on the same commercial terms as firms in markets where there are many suppliers and the consequences of poor decision-making are restricted to the firms themselves. They have to carry more investment and capacity than is necessary on strict commercial grounds; must have higher safety margins; and operate with a high standard of propriety. Because they are monopolies, the best way to meet these criteria is for the companies to be owned by the consumers; in other words, they should be structured as non-profit-making trusts, or mutuals, or even have their shares owned by government.

But over the past 15 years all forms of public ownership have been derided as bureaucratic and inefficient. The international consensus among finance ministries and international economic institutions such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the International Monetary Fund is that the private sector has no incentive other than to be efficient and mistake-free because of its overriding need to make high profits.

Only the public sector has incentives to make mistakes and be inefficient. Thus the privatisation of public assets, especially utilities, will simultaneously raise efficiency and boost the public-sector balance sheet. Privatisation is win/win.

Two Mexican sailors count their change by candlelight as Auckland's blackout continues PHOTO: ROSS LAND

But Auckland has discovered this is baloney. Mercury Energy, supplier of the city's electricity, has been privatised around a similar structure to that in Britain. It is a distribution company buying electricity from two power generators who, so far, remain in public ownership, to distribute in central Auckland. However, Mercury's commercial objective has not been to distribute electricity. It has been to raise financial returns from its assets, lift its cash flow and so finance its ambition to take over its rivals.

Inflating profits is easy to do. You reduce the workforce; you scale back the surplus capacity to make the operation lean; and you defer investment that does not meet normal commercial criteria.

In other large cities in New Zealand the engineers that up until now ran the electricity distribution system as a public interest have insisted that there are up to 10 major power cables delivering power. Some of the cables are never used: they act as standbys to avoid total power loss if the main cables fail. But it is uneconomic: in effect, it is an expensive insurance policy.

Mercury only had four cables distributing power in Auckland. What the firm should not have done was go on the takeover trail; it should have invested in the distribution system even if it did imply additional overheads. So when freak conditions put all four cables out of commission, Mercury had no back-up. The system crashed and Auckland is without power.

Auckland's lessons should not be lost on the British, especially the 3 million electricity consumers in East Anglia and North London. The ownership and control of Energy Corporation, a distribution company which owns the old Eastern Electricity, is being fought over by two United States utilities — Oregon-based PacificCorp and Dallas-based Texas Utilities. When the auction began, Energy was around $10.40 a share: now Texas is offering $13.40 a share. It is prepared to pay $7.2 billion for assets that produce profits of $640 million and which have little scope to grow.

It is absurd. Once the deal is done, the pressures will be to run Energy in exactly the same way as Mercury. Britain's tiny regulator, Offer, will be given the runaround — and, anyway, it does not have the power or mandate to investigate closely how the assets are managed and run; its job is to set prices. Its feebleness is one of the reasons US utilities are prepared to pay so much for British electricity companies.

The British doctrine is that the decision over whether to sell and at what price should solely be at the discretion of the Energy Group board serving the interests of the shareholders — and that the interests of any new shareholders in Oregon or Dallas can only coincide with electricity consumers in Britain. We know that cannot be true. If there were a body of corporate law built around stakeholder principles, Energy and companies like it would have to take into account other interests than those of shareholders. Regulation could be beefed up — and utilities put on notice that they will be taken back into public ownership in the event of sustained power failure.

New Labour, we know, won't go that far. But it is considering toughening up regulation next year in its Utilities Bill. Events in Auckland should redouble its determination.
— *The Observer*

Reader's Digest fails to deliver

Mark Tran in New York

RESOLUTELY old-fashioned, filled with upbeat stories, Reader's Digest still boasts the world's largest magazine circulation — more than 27 million copies in 19 languages sold each month. But these impressive figures mask a dismal performance at the magazine's parent company, Reader's Digest Association, created 76 years ago by DeWitt and Lila Wallace to "inform, enrich, entertain and inspire".

While the United States stock market has streaked upwards in recent years, the share price of Reader's Digest has gone through the floor, from a high of $56 in 1992 to its current level of $26. Several outside investor groups have been agitating for a change of management — to no avail. Peter Canning, author of a book about the Reader's Digest saga, describes the decline as one of the "saddest, most sordid tales in the history of US journalism".

Reader's Digest is a strange creature, and a public company in name only. Its structure flies in the face of corporate governance practices adopted to improve transparency and accountability. It has an unusual management structure, which allows the chairman and chief executive officer, George Grune, a 68-year-old former marine, to act like lord of the manor.

Mr Grune once ran Reader's Digest Association when it prospered. He ditched unprofitable subsidiaries and added new speciality titles. But he neglected the crown jewel, Reader's Digest magazine, allowing contracts with the best writers to lapse. The number of US subscriptions has decreased by a million since 1993, and the magazine is failing to attract younger readers.

Although it accounts for only 29 per cent of revenue, Reader's Digest provides the brand name on which to hang a host of other ventures — books, music and videos — sold mostly through direct marketing. These divisions bring in most of the sales and profits, but if the magazine does not prosper, the rest of the company cannot do so. Operating profits have fallen for the past four years and the company has announced a 35 per cent drop in second-quarter earnings, its sixth consecutive poor quarter.

Mr Grune came out of retirement last August amid dissatisfaction with his hand-picked successor, James Schadt, whose "revitalisation plan" led to a 21 per cent drop in the company's share price.

Mr Grune was supposed to come back as interim chief executive while Reader's Digest looked for a permanent replacement. But he has since made it clear that he plans to stick around.

Reader's Digest says the company's fortunes will improve as Mr Grune takes it back to basics. He has ditched an expensive Internet search engine and returned to the company's old philosophy of product-testing — abandoned by Mr Schadt — to give customers precisely what they want. Outside investors have long lost patience, criticising Mr Grune's unwillingness to sell assets such as works of art and property and reinvest the proceeds in the core business, or explore the possibility of selling the company, estimated by analysts to be worth about $5 billion.

But given the company's structure, Mr Grune is more than usually insulated from such discontent. "The company is a disaster," says Marion Kessler, portfolio manager at Crabbe Hudson. "Reader's Digest is one of the greatest franchises in history, and these guys are running it into the ground."

UK rushes to close offshore tax loopholes

Ewen MacAskill and Roger Cowe

GORDON Brown, the UK Chancellor, launched a surprise attack on offshore tax avoidance last week after evidence of hundreds of millions of dollars being squirrelled away to beat an expected Budget clampdown. The pre-emptive strike amounted to confirmation that Mr Brown will use next week's Budget to close a host of tax loopholes.

The Treasury rushed out the announcement despite knowing it would reignite the controversy over the involvement in a $16 million offshore trust of the Treasury minister, Geoffrey Robinson. The shadow chief secretary to the Treasury, David Heathcoat-Amory, demanded to know whether Mr Robinson, the Paymaster General, was affected by the move and accused the Government of "hypocrisy on a grand scale".

A treasury source said Mr Brown had been forced to act after being informed by the Inland Revenue that several individuals, speculating that there will be measures in the Budget to curb offshore tax havens, had been shifting their funds to avoid tax.

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury, Dawn Primarolo, said: "This government is determined to stem tax leakage by detecting, deterring and countering tax avoidance. We will, therefore, take action, to be included in the next Finance Bill, to prevent avoidance of tax by those who dispose of an interest in, or originating from, a trust which has ever been an offshore trust."

The measure took effect immediately. Holders of offshore trusts can no longer escape paying capital gains tax by bringing trusts on shore and then disposing of them.

An Inland Revenue spokeswoman said there had been a serious threat to the $1.8 billion take from capital gains tax.

In the kind of scheme affected, tax is avoided by converting the trust into a UK vehicle and then selling the interest to a bank or rich individual abroad.

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Sterling rates March 9	Sterling rates March 2
Australia	2.4529-2.4563	2.4178-2.4209
Austria	21.02-21.04	21.00-21.02
Belgium	61.63-61.73	61.58-61.67
Canada	2.3126-2.3147	2.3509-2.3530
Denmark	11.39-11.40	11.38-11.38
France	10.02-10.03	10.00-10.01
Germany	2.9887-2.9913	2.9858-2.9586
Hong Kong	12.63-12.67	12.75-12.76
Ireland	1.2033-1.2058	1.2020-1.2044
Italy	2,940-2,942	2,937-2,942
Japan	208.89-209.18	206.70-206.93
Netherlands	3.3679-3.3710	3.3652-3.3680
New Zealand	2.8228-2.8279	2.8042-2.8090
Norway	12.43-12.44	12.47-12.48
Portugal	305.67-306.02	305.72-306.05
Spain	253.15-253.43	252.93-253.22
Sweden	13.09-13.11	13.14-13.17
Switzerland	2.4529-2.4563	2.4100-2.4138
USA	1.6361-1.6371	1.6480-1.6489
ECU	1.5100-1.5119	1.5092-1.5107

FTSE 100 Share index down 1.7 at 5818.9. FTSE 250 index up 3.8 at 5267.8. Gold down $6.15 at $299.95.

ASSOCIATION OF COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITIES

University	Post	Ref. No.
AFRICA AND THE CARIBBEAN		
Botswana	AP/SL Home Economics Education	W46484
Botswana	AP Accounting & Finance	W46485
Botswana	P Civil Engineering	W46486
Botswana	SL Water & Environmental Engineering	W46487
Botswana	L Mathematics Education	W46507
Botswana	L Infant/Early Childhood Education	W46508
Botswana	L History	W46509
Swaziland	Computer Centre Manager	W46511
Swaziland	L Geomorphology/Geology	W46512
Swaziland	AP/SL/L Educational Foundations & Management	W46513
Swaziland	Senior Assistant Bursar: Stock, Debtors & Fixed Assets	W46514
Swaziland	Senior Assistant Bursar: Creditors, Payroll & Payments	W46515
Swaziland	Senior Assistant Bursar: General Ledger, Reporting	W46516
UWI (Jamaica)	L Philosophy/Sociology of Education	W46494
UWI (Jamaica)	SL/L Educational Psychology	W46495
UWI (Jamaica)	L Educational Administration	W46496
UWI (Jamaica)	SL/L Social Studies	W46497
UWI (Jamaica)	L History Education	W46498
UWI (Jamaica)	L Cardiothoracic Surgery	W46504
UWI (Jamaica)	RF Agroforestry	W46505
UWI (Trinidad)	Workshop Engineer	W46477
UWI (Trinidad)	L/AL Spanish	W46478
UWI (Trinidad)	L/AL Physics	W46479
UWI (Trinidad)	L/AL Veterinary Medicine	W46480
UWI (Trinidad)	Chair in Petroleum Engineering	W46492
HONG KONG		
Hong Kong	Director Centre for Physical Education & Sport	W46474
Hong Kong	ASP Social Work Practice	W46481
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Hong Kong	RO Institute of Molecular Biology	W46502
HK Polytechnic Univ.	Chair/P Mathematics	W46483
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Abbreviations: P - Professor; AP - Associate Professor; ASP - Assistant Professor; SL - Senior Lecturer; L - Lecturer; AL - Assistant Lecturer; RF - Research Fellow; RO - Research Officer.

For further details of any of the above staff vacancies please contact ACU (Advertising), 36 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PF, UK (Internat. tel. +44 171 387 8572 ext. 206 (UK office hours); fax +44 171 383 0368; e-mail: appts@acu.ac.uk), quoting reference number of post(s). Details will be sent by airmail/first class post. A sample copy of the publication *Appointments in Commonwealth Universities*, including subscription details, is available from the same source.

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Lecturer

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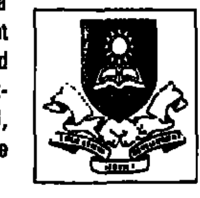
Contact persons: Mr Andrew Kanime at (+264-61) 206-3151 or Ms Monica Heita at (+264-61) 206-3102.

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Informal enquiries to: the Head of Department, Professor John Simmons, (tel: 0131 451 3132; fax: 0131 451 4129; e-mail: j.simmons@hw.ac.uk).

For application details please contact the Personnel Office, Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh, EH14 4AS, tel: 0131 451 3475 (24 hours), quoting ref: 41/98/G. Closing date: 30 April 1998.

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Informal enquiries are welcome, and should be directed to Professor H Schröder, tel: 01509 228225, fax: 01509 211586, email: h.schroder@lboro.ac.uk.
http://info.lboro.ac.uk/departments/co/index.html

For further details and an application form contact Personnel Services, Loughborough University, Loughborough, Leics, LE11 3TU. Tel: 01509 222173 (24 hours) or email: personnel@lboro.ac.uk. Please quote ref: CO/180/303. Closing date: 31 March 1998.

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SCHOOL OF GEOGRAPHY
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The School of Geography offers qualified students the opportunity to pursue postgraduate research leading to MPhil and PhD degrees (both full-time and part-time). The School also offers two MSc/Diploma taught degrees: World Space Economy and Urbanism. The entrance requirement for the PhD programme is a 2:1 or 1st Class Honours degree, and/or a Masters degree in Geography or a related subject. Applicants for the taught degrees should have a good undergraduate degree in Geography or a related subject.

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- Developed Market Economies: particularly regional development, advanced services and high-technology industries
- Emerging Regions: particularly Central Europe and the former Soviet Union, Southern Africa and Latin America
- Urban Forms and Cultures: particularly residential townscapes, conservation and adaptation and urban identities

In addition, the School has a number of research projects, some of which are listed below, for which it is seeking candidates for possible ESRC studentship applications and School Studentships.

- "The Glocalisation of Labour Markets: High Technology Skilled Migration"
- "Geographies of Financial Inclusion and Exclusion in Birmingham"
- "Shaking and Moving Corporate Geographies: Symbolic Analysis in the City of London"
- "Emerging Markets: the Construction of a Geographical Imagination and the role of expert knowledges"
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TAUGHT COURSES

MSc/Diploma: World Space Economy: this well established one-year course provides a geographical exploration of change in the world economy. The course has ESRC Advanced Course 'Specialist' recognition. In addition the School will be offering a variety of financial support. For further information please contact the course director, Dr Nick Henry, telephone 0121 414 7282. (e-mail: N.D.Henry@bham.ac.uk) or at the address given below.

MSc/Diploma: Urbanism: this one-year course provides a theoretically informed examination of the processes and effects of change in urban areas. The School will be offering a variety of forms of financial support. For further information please contact the course director: Dr Jane Pollard, telephone 0121 414 5530, (e-mail: J.S.Pollard@bham.ac.uk) or at the address below.

Further information on all these postgraduate opportunities, a prospectus and application forms are available from the Postgraduate Tutor, School of Geography, The University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TT, telephone 0121 414 5535, fax 0121 414 5528. An electronic version of our Postgraduate Prospectus can be found at: www.bham.ac.uk/publications/geog/index.htm

Department of Education Victoria

Expression of Interest

International Consultancy Work in Vietnam

The Overseas Projects Corporation of Victoria (OPCV) and the Department of Education, Victoria, Australia have been short listed for an Asian Development Bank Loan project in Vietnam, known as the Lower Secondary Education Project. The project is expected to start in the second half of 1998.

The consortium is seeking expressions of interest from persons with relevant expertise for the position of

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- Publishing Management Specialist (3 person months).

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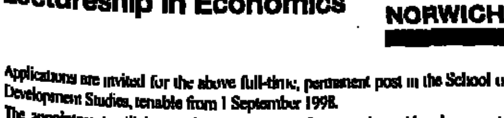
- post graduate qualifications in a related discipline at Masters or Doctorate level,
- developing country experience related to the project's terms of reference preferably with Asian Development Bank projects.

Application Details

Copies of the terms of reference can be obtained from Maina Walkley, Coordinator International Projects, International Education and Marketing Branch, Department of Education, Victoria, Australia, e-mail maina.walkley@dse.vic.gov.au, phone 61 3 9637 2317 or fax her a copy of a detailed Curriculum Vitae on 61 3 9637 2010 by 13 March 1998.

Victoria **ON THE MOVE**

School of Development Studies
Lectureship in Economics



UEA NORWICH

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The appointment will be made in any area of economics with relevance to developing countries. Applicants should have, or expect to complete in the near future, a PhD. A track record of research publications and overseas experience is essential.

The successful candidate will be expected to contribute to economics teaching at the undergraduate and Masters level and have an interest in teaching in an interdisciplinary context. The appointment also involves membership of the Overseas Development Group which requires the appointee to work up to one third of their time on externally funded research, training and consultancy, usually in developing countries.

Salary will be on the Lecturer A scale, £16,045 to £21,016 per annum or Lecturer B scale, £21,894 to £27,985 per annum, plus USS benefits.

Further particulars and an application form should be obtained from the Director of Personnel and Registry Services, University of East Anglia, Norwich, NR4 7TJ (answerphone 01603-593493, e-mail Personnel@uea.ac.uk), to be returned by 15 April 1998. Please quote reference AC186.

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Candidates wishing to discuss the posts may contact Olga Tregaskis in the Centre for European Human Resource Management on (01234) 751122.

Application forms and further details are available from the Personnel Department, Cranfield University, Cranfield, Beds MK43 0AL. Telephone (01234) 750111 extension 2000 (24 hour Recruitment Line) quoting the appropriate reference number. Closing date for receipt of applications: 14th April 1998.

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

SCHOOL OF ENGLISH AND AMERICAN STUDIES

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with special reference to Science and Technology (Ref: 282)

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The appointment will be made on either Lecturer Grade A (£16,045 - £21,016) or Grade B (£21,894 - £27,985) per annum on the Teaching Faculty scales. Closing date: Friday 3 April 1998.

Application forms and further details for the above position are available from and should be returned to Sarah Marshall, Staffing Services Office, Sussex House, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton BN1 9RH. Tel: (01273) 678202. Email S.A.Marshall@sussex.ac.uk

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DIRECTOR OF RELIEF AND SOCIAL SERVICES

UNRWA, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees requires a **Director of Relief and Social Services** at its Headquarters in Amman. Reporting directly to the Commissioner-General, the Director is responsible for policy guidance and technical direction of relief and developmental social welfare programmes affecting some 10% of the 3.5 million Palestine refugees in the Agency's 5 fields of operation (Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, West Bank and Gaza). Work includes: formulating and overseeing the implementation of policy and strategic plans; assessment of adequacy of services and programmes; monitoring and evaluation of impact of programmes on the welfare of target groups; coordination of assistance from governments, voluntary agencies and other UN organizations; technical direction and supervision of programme staff.

Requirements: university degree in social welfare or related field plus advanced coursework in poverty alleviation or community development, with emphasis on the application of social welfare policies and methodologies to developmental programmes; at least 15 years' related experience with 10 years at the managerial level and 5 years at the international level, in organizations concerned with social welfare and providing aid to refugees or other underprivileged groups in developing countries. **Language:** Excellent command of spoken and written English. **Desirable:** Post graduate degree in developmental social welfare, knowledge of Middle East environment and cultures, prior service with the UN in the Middle East, working knowledge of French and Arabic, computer literacy.

Remuneration: This D1 level post carries an annual net (tax free) salary starting from $83,300 (with dependents) and $76,400 (single) plus fringe benefits (education grant, home leave, dependency allowance, pension fund and health plan)

Applications may be sent **before 31 March 1998** to Head, Recruitment Section (VN/5/98), UNRWA HQ Gaza via UNRWA Vienna Office, P.O. Box 700, A-1400 Vienna, Austria or, Fax No. (+972-7) 677 7555, from where additional information may be requested.

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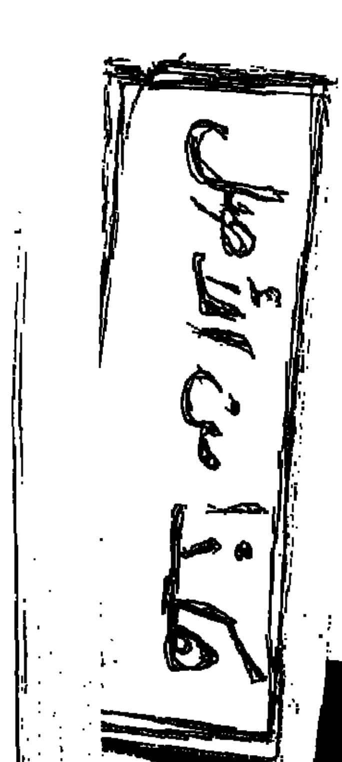
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I'm not a number, I'm a free shopper

Loyalty cards have provided supermarkets with a vast amount of data on their customers. **Lisa Buckingham** and **Roger Cowe** see trouble in store

WRITING the shopping list is almost as tedious as trekking round the supermarket. So it would be a boon if the store could do it for you.

That day is not far off, thanks to the mass of data painstakingly collected on the millions of customers who have signed up for so-called loyalty cards.

Loyalty has nothing to do with it, as is obvious from the fact that many British shoppers have cards in their purse or wallet from Tesco, Sainsbury and Safeway. Information is what the companies want. Just like the anonymous authorities in the cult sixties TV series, The Prisoner, the supermarket chains want to know more about their customers.

One day you may find yourself waking up to an e-mail from Sainsbury suggesting what you need to buy that week. They know where you live, what you normally buy and when you last bought it.

There's no escape. Like the bizarre giant bubble which used to emerge out of the sea to prevent the series' hero Patrick McGoohan escaping, the supermarket computer will do its best to stop you leaving the store without picking up what it thinks you need.

It is just one example of the ways in which retailers hope to entice and cajole shoppers to spend more money in their stores. Others could include individualised mailshots, also based on a shopper's spending patterns, such as encouraging somebody who buys nappies to try other baby products.

Nappies feature prominently in stories about this new era in data-based marketing. One United States chain discovered that Friday nights saw a peak in purchases of both nappies and booze. They concluded that men were being sent out for emergency nappy supplies, and were taking the opportunity to stock up on six-packs. Their response was to move the nappies so that they were nearer to the booze.

Then there is last week's news from Boots The Chemist. The chain has come up with a home shopping offer targeted at 3 million mothers and pregnant women, using information gathered from the Advantage card launched last year.

Boots' Mother & Baby At Home allows the chain to join in the rush to mail order with an offer targeted at customers most likely to welcome not having to trail down the high street. And Boots is extending its product range with items such as maternity clothes, which it could not sensibly sell in-store.

This is all part of the move from mass marketing to what has become known as "the segment of one" or "micro marketing". The aim is to capture the benefits of large and small scale.

In the words of Staffordshire university's Professor Steve Worthington: "The economics of the mass market meets the culture of the corner shop — the wide choice of the supermarket can be allied to the personalised knowledge of the customer."

Experts claim big business is still inept, however, when it comes to using all the data available. The information provided when someone signs up for a loyalty card plus a few months of shopping records could provide a more detailed portrait of customers' habits than supermarkets enjoy. Not only would this allow them better to target shoppers with specific offers but would give them a more accurate grasp of how their business operates.

Combine this with the detailed data volunteered by people who complete market research questionnaires, and businesses also have a tool to target other firms' customers.

On the other side of the retail divide, however, privacy campaigners find the cards alarming because of the volume of information that can be gathered.

They know where you live, what you normally buy and when you last bought it

Experian, a data management subsidiary of mail-order company GUS, compiles resident profiles that tell retailers what kind of people are likely to live in each area.

Experian's Peter Brooke says this allows targeted mailshots that are slowly superceding junk mail. "There are still a lot of duff mailing lists out there. But the old days of sending out 5 million pieces and expecting 0.5 per cent response are gone. Now you get smaller mailings and a higher response — as high as 70 per cent, although 20-30 per cent would be more normal."

The secret is knowing what people are most likely to be interested in. "If you know what people like, then you can target customers accurately. If they have given the information voluntarily it will be more reliable," says Brooke.

They have not yet achieved rifle shot accuracy, however. It is more a case of having moved from the blunderbuss to the machine gun.

Keith McNamara, brand manager for customer relationship marketing at computer company ICL, says it is a long road. "Retailers are moving from mass marketing to one-to-one marketing. There are many steps along the way and loyalty programmes are one step. They provide value so customers want to have an intimate relationship with the store."

Boots appears keen to avoid any suggestion that it is beginning to make really intelligent use of shopping records to target groups. A spokeswoman said the computer capacity was beyond the company at the moment. It uses only the information customers provide when they sign up for a loyalty card rather than the spending trail they lay once they have got one.

McNamara denies that technology is the stumbling block. He blames the marketing people. "Retailers need to get their act in gear to provide offers that are meaningful."

Cost is one deterrent to customers of companies such as ICL who want to use data effectively. But the cost is coming down, leaving less excuse for marketing managers.

"The technology is not cheap and it makes them gulp a bit. But the marketing skills are the real problem. There are not a lot of people who know how to use the technology intelligently. It's not part of the marketing mindset. Take Marks & Spencer; there is no finer training in the world than their programmes for buyers and merchandisers. But it doesn't focus on understanding the customer."

Ironically, until recently, the country's greatest selling businesses were never concerned with marketing. Their strengths were in buying, not selling, and marketing expertise was based in the manufacturers. That is changing fast as retailers grab the chance to push the manufacturers into the background and build their own brands.

But Big Brother is a worrying concept, even if the Brother is Lord Sainsbury. Retailers and others involved in the area seem to want to advance slowly in an effort to avoid claims of intrusiveness. One executive involved in advanced card technology for a leading bank said: "We need to have a lengthy public debate about the whole question of cards and privacy."

Boots admits that it would want to make much more analytical use of consumers' track records in the future, but says it was aware that the issue could become a hot potato.

One answer is to refuse to answer market research questions. The Consumers Association stresses that no one should be refused a loyalty card because of that. Also the Data Protection Act provides that any information can be checked by the customer — for a fee. Companies are also allowed to charge $16 for supplying this information and have up to 40 days to reply to a request.

An alternative approach could be to confuse the computer, buying nappies one week even if you haven't got a baby, and a denture cleaner even if you have all your own teeth.

Patrick McGoohan never escaped; but nor did they ever get the information out of him.

CLASSIFIED

CAR HIRE

Monkey business

CITY OF WORDS

John Ryle

THE latest Internet plaything, more fun than a virtual pet, hotter than hypertext, is automatic translation. If you're a Web *aficionado* you'll have heard about this; translation software has been in professional use for some years. But recently it became available, free, to all comers on the Alta Vista search engine. All you have to do is paste your text into a box, or type in the address of the web page you want translated, and — Caramba! — it reappears in the language of your choice. Or something like it.

In the speedy way of the Web, almost before it is up and running, the Alta Vista translation service has been awarded the Cooler Than Sliced Bread Award. It's been included on a leading Net magazine's list of the Twenty-five Most Incredibly Useful Sites. Who can resist such accolades? Not I. What better excuse to rack up hours online?

"Cooler than sliced bread." Perhaps you'd like to hear that in French? Access the translator. A wave of the wand, a furtive whirr. Into French it goes — *"le refroidisseur que la récompense découpées en tranches de pain"* — and out again: "Prompt way of the Web, almost before it is in service, the translation service of Alta Vista was allotted the cooler that the reward cut out in bread sections."

Hm. Then how about this incoming e-mail from Brazil. "Caro John ..." it begins. "Expensive John," runs the English translation. "How excellent surprise to get you. It does not import why reason. I will be giving some plants during the carnival ..."

Giving plants? It seems computers are about as good at English as the average foreigner. Sometimes they get it; sometimes they don't. One reviewer of the Alta Vista translator tried what he described as a popular tourist phrase "How much for the monkey?" Translated into German and back, it became: "How much for the drop hammer?" As he remarked, you don't have to know what a drop hammer is to know you'd be upset if you walked out of the monkey store in Stuttgart with one.

Well, robots can't dance. Not yet. Your computer speaks Franglais; it speaks Eurotrash. Machine translation is not about to be used in UN treaty recognition, or even for business correspondence.

In the digital future, maybe, when we all have computers in the heels of our shoes, translation software will improve. Voice-recognition programmes and speech synthesisers will reside in microcircuitry the size of a hair. The tower of Babel will be torn down, and we will all speak in the tongues of angels. But they will be translated into virtual English, a pidgin derived from prolonged interactions with computer-generated speech. It will be recognisably robotic, this language, so the rich will be polylingual and the poor will be monoglot. Alpha will meet omega — and this column, with the aid of a style algorithm and a Web browser and a few newspaper clippings, will write itself, with no human intermediary.

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What happened to storming the barricades? Students from a London college PHOTO DAVID SILLITOE

Save the world or pay off the student loan? The young in Britain are charged with being obsessed with themselves. **Owen Bowcott** and **Luke Harding** report

The victory of me over we

IN A bright, third-floor office in north London, decorated with ferns going a little brown at the edges, Anthony Forth can be found most days. In the early weeks in this office, his time was spent feeding the voracious fax machine. These days, he might draft a press release on the state of the rain forest or chat to colleagues on the "mahogany desk", next to the map of a tree-denuded Madagascar.

After work most of his salaried friends sink a couple of pints and head off for a vegetable curry. Instead, Anthony walks back to King's Cross station, past a brownfield site now being busily converted into neo-yuppie flats. Home is a one-bedroom flat in central Luton.

Anthony is a volunteer. And if a dispiriting survey last month by Voluntary Service Overseas is anything to go by, he is rapidly becoming something of an endangered species in this "me-first" generation.

Last week the charity announced it is experiencing a recruitment slump. For the first time in a decade the number of volunteers being sent overseas by VSO has dropped. Applicants have also fallen away, by 22 per cent over the past two years, ostensibly proving that twentysomethings are becoming "more selfish and less caring" — turning their back on youthful idealism.

The anecdotal evidence remains mixed. In economic boom times, skills are always in short supply, wages rise and fewer people volunteer their free time. But animal rights demonstrations, environmental pressure groups and anti-road protests still draw in hundreds of thousands of dedicated activists. Greenpeace, which has 215,000 UK members, says it is receiving more young volunteers than last year. The think tank Demos has puzzled over the apparent disengagement of those aged between 18 and 34 from traditional mainstream politics. "It is very easy to paint a negative picture," their 1995 report, Freedom's Children, explained.

"The evidence seems to suggest that 18-to 34-year-olds are apathetic and inward-looking: that those at the lower end of the age range have not yet fully accepted the responsibilities of adulthood while those at the higher end of the range have become selfish.

"Given the right issue, however, young people do become active. Although young people are less environmentally active than the 35-to 55 age group, environmental concerns are much more likely to galvanise them into into action than anything else. Remarkably, a third of young people claim to have been involved in protests on animal rights." But in the United States, a similar debate has resulted in the Peace Corps being given $50 million. Mark Gearan, the organisation's director, maintains that "the popular perceptions about Generation X — that young people are slackers with little motivation — is a myth". The Peace Corps is now planning to double its 6,500 volunteers overseas within the next two years. But is that a lot when one considers that the United States has a population of more than 266 million? Perhaps Britain's young are merely switching the focus of their social concerns? Eco-issues are displacing Third World development, VSO's traditional theme, in the popular imagination.

But it is not hard to see why most of Anthony's peers who graduated from Luton university have eschewed volunteering altogether for more lucrative professional positions. "It is very awkward going out with working friends. You either get into accepting charity or you can't afford to buy them a drink. That feels really embarrassing," he explains, from the Friends Of The Earth Office, where he has worked as a volunteer for six months.

While Anthony finds his job varied and stimulating (Ben Elton recently popped in, adding a frisson of celebrity glamour) he receives no salary at all. The charity pays only his daily rail fare.

He survives by signing on and is entitled to an extra $16 (£10) on top of his benefit in recognition of his charity work. Anthony has given up going to the theatre, and last went out for a meal in early 1997. "The thing that gets me is clothes. You can eat and go out a little bit but you can't afford to buy clothes. I had a couple of job interviews recently and I had to buy a shirt, which was a great wodge out of my benefit for two weeks."

It takes no great genius, then, to see why many young people are increasingly reluctant to embrace a penurious lifestyle in a booming jobs market where average graduate starting salaries have now risen to $25,500. Such choices may also be part of a deeper shift in attitudes. There is little hanging around after college, as there was in the sixties and seventies, to mull over possible directions in life.

Graduates are competing for jobs long before final exams to pay back student loans and accumulate cash for the daunting price tags of the property market ahead. And once professionally employed, it is a lifestyle that is harder and harder to renounce before early retirement.

"*PEOPLE* are keen to get on and have careers," explains an official at the National Union Of Students, "because of the legacy of debt and hardship they have endured. The average student on leaving college now owes $6,500 . . . It makes people keen to go into jobs straight away rather than go travelling."

Are Britons simultaneously becoming more insular as the world loses the mystery of its remoteness? The commonplace that the world is shrinking, that we travel abroad more frequently as citizens of a globalised economy may, paradoxically, reduce our foreign experiences to consumer item holidays — a blur of semi-assimilated airports, resorts and hotels.

On charitable giving, there is hard statistical underpinning showing that the young are making fewer and fewer donations. According to the Institute of Fiscal Studies, 31 per cent of twenty- and thirtysomethings were giving cash in 1974. By 1993, that proportion had slipped to 21 per cent. For those over 60, however, the figures barely registered any change.

The decline, Sarah Tanner of the IFS ventures, is likely to be due to "increasing income uncertainty, falling participation in religious activity and the declining trust for collective bodies".

Whether this is proof that the coming generation is spiritually Thatcher's children, for whom the term "society" has no meaning, remains a debatable point.

The Institute of Volunteering Research reported that only 43 per cent of those aged 18 to 24 acted as volunteers last year, compared with 55 per cent in 1991. Even more dramatic was the fall in the average number of hours per week, from 2.7 in 1991 to 0.7 in 1997.

"There's some evidence that people are less engaged with traditional, philanthropic organisations and switching their involvement to direct action," says Stuart Etherington, chief executive of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations.

"I was in a voluntary bureau in Liverpool recently and, unusually, there were a lot of young people there. Most of them, it turned out, were out of the workforce and looking to learn new skills."

Further disturbing evidence suggesting that the older generation are more radical than their career-obsessed offspring emerged in a recent Guardian/ICM poll. Two-thirds of Britain's under-24s backed a military campaign against Saddam Hussein, while their parents and grandparents in the over-65 category barely scraped together a majority in favour. Pacifism and CND have evidently lost their power to shape the international outlook of the young.

But do any of these disparate trends prove there is an emerging "me-first" generation who are more selfish and less caring? Hardly. The twenty- and thirtysomethings may be squeezed by harsher economic realities than their parents but it doesn't mean they have turned their back on society or the world.

Taking two-year career breaks — the pattern of volunteer commitment long favoured by VSO but now under review — may have become increasingly difficult. The professionalisation of most aid agencies, however, has ensured that tens of thousands of people are permanently engaged in development projects around the world. They are prepared to forgo the far larger incomes they might command from the private sector.

Two other charities, Red R and British Executive Service Overseas (BESO), exemplify the changes. Both send British professionals abroad to help in development and disaster relief work but for short periods of up to six months. Neither are short of unpaid volunteers.

Red R keeps a register of 700 experienced engineers, most of whom are aged between 25 and 40. They are dispatched overseas to work during their holidays or with short-term leave from the company. BESO, whose volunteers have an average age of 58, hints at another pattern — of professionals postponing charity work until retirement. With longer life expectancy, it is the old who are becoming restless.

Lisa Reilly, aged 33, a VSO mechanical engineer who is about to return to her contract in Namibia recognises the competing tensions for her generation. "If you get on to the career ladder and wonder about [the wisdom of] risking taking two years out with the job situation — it's less selfishness than self-preservation. But volunteering is a great opportunity to do something completely different, to step off the world for a change of view."

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ILLUSTRATION: BARRY LARKING

Wandering thoughts

Paul Evans

A *STRONG* breeze picks up and rattles the tree-tops. Under a sky of a thousand greys, with brilliant sunlight streaking through gaps in the cloud cover, the woods hold their own unique dramas. Each clatter of wings, bird-call, twig-snap and flitting shadow marks a never-to-be-repeated moment. A pile of feathers is forensic evidence of a sparrow hawk kill. Fresh, scratched-up soil bears witness to the hunger of badgers. A clump of garden snowberry forms an archive of settlements long since sucked into the history of the wood. A black-beaked skull tells the legend of a fallen crow and its continued descent into the earth.

Between the trees, lawns of thin-bladed leaves promise the spectacular bluebell phenomenon to come. Golden flowers of celandine and coltsfoot, swaying hazel catkins . . . It all adds up to an affirmation of the eternal return of spring and the spirals of life and death in which all beings spin.

I'm lucky. I can be here. I can experience this. In a few minutes I can walk out of town to a country lane and follow it into these woods. Here I can roam woodland paths, sit by ponds, scramble through trees, climb up and down hills, and although there is a network of public rights of way, many of my rambles are technically trespassing. But nobody has stopped me yet. I can lob over a stile at the edge of the wood into the teeth of the wind and proclaim my right to do so. Many are not so lucky. Our right to roam is only self-proclaimed and denied by the owners of so much of this land.

As I was wandering the woods, the Government was telling landowners that they will be forced by law to allow public access to uncultivated land if they do not do so voluntarily. The pressure is now on them to provide freedom of access to 3.5 million acres of mountain, moorland, heath and registered common land in England and Wales, 12 per cent of the total land area.

But woodland, cliffs, riversides and the foreshore have not been included. At present people are only free to roam one-fifth of the ambiguously designated "common" land. There are of course passionate arguments on all sides. The Government recognises that people "want freedom to explore more widely" than the restricted footpaths that may or may not be open across private land, and that "walking can provide real benefits for people's physical and mental well-being".

The Ramblers Association and others are not convinced that voluntary agreements will work and are disappointed that a legally binding right to roam uncultivated land has not been established. They suspect a failure of nerve. The Country Landowners Association, whose 50,000 members own 60 per cent of the land in England and Wales, is up in arms. It is threatening to seek damages under the European Convention on Human Rights on the grounds that its members rights are being abused.

As so often happens, those who have most struggle to maintain their power over those who have least. We will see if this Government has the stomach for a fight with powerful landowners. We will see if rights can be juggled, responsibilities shared, duties redistributed and who may roam the moral high ground and who may not. But this issue is more than a conflict between "rights". It is about what sort of a society we want; what sort of relationship we have with the world we live in. To wander, if we can (not if we may), is surely in the nature of our very being.

Chess Leonard Barden

THE decisive first prize game at Hastings in January was settled by what is, to ordinary players, a frightening trend in contemporary chess, namely opening preparation extending far beyond move 20. Fritz 5 and ChessBase make pre-game homework more focused (it is possible to suss out your opponent's pet lines and even play trial games against them) and they can also improve your memory at the board. Seeing your intended opening on a computer screen aids recall better than having to refer to printed material while you play over the variation on your pocket set.

Of course it is possible to prepare well, yet come unstuck. I remember how, 40 years ago, I acquired the bulletins of the 1958 Soviet Championship, then the last word in theory, by setting up a furtive swap with a friend in Moscow. Geller had introduced a sharp mazy novelty in a mainline Ruy Lopez in a system used by my opponent in the British Championship that afternoon. Sure enough, the moves followed Geller's game, mine rapidly and A Y Green's at hesitant intervals. But when we reached the critical position, Green found, at the board, a stronger move than any the GM had analysed.

Modern technical facilities cannot prevent psychological naivety. Here the white player repeated 31 moves of a game where Sadler had been defeated. Did Relange really have the bizarre belief that his opponent would lose the same way again?

E Relange v M Sadler

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 a6 6 Bg5 e6 7 f4 Be7 8 Qf3 Qc7 9 0-0-0 Nbd7 10 g4 b5 11 Bxf6 Nxf6 12 g5 Nd7 13 f5 A well-known gambit to open lines. **Bxg5+ 14 Kb1 Ne5 15 Qh5 Qd8 16 Nxe6 Bxe6 17 fxe6 0-0 18 Rg1 Bf6 19 exf7+** Nunn prefers 19 Bh3. **Kh8** Here Rxf7? 20 Bh3 favours White.

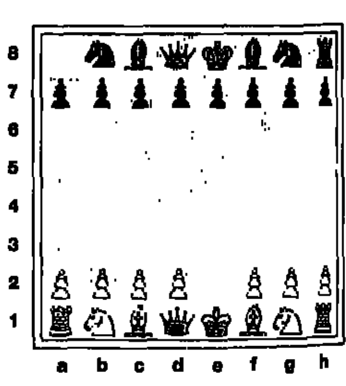
20 Nd5 g6 21 Qh3 Rxf7 22 Nf4 Qd7 23 Qb3 Qc6 24 Bh3 Bg7 25 Rgf1 Raf8 26 Ne6 Rxf1 27 Bxf1 Rf2 28 a4 bxa4! b4? 29 h3 h6 30 Nd4 Qc8 31 Qe6 favoured White in Oll v Sadler, Denmark 1997. But we are still following theory.

29 Qb8+ Bf8 30 Nxf8 Qxc2+ 31 Ka2 Nc6! Relange was trustingly following Oll's analysis in Informator 70, which only considered Qb3+ 32 Qxb3 with a good endgame or Kg7 32 Ne6+ Kh6 33 Qb6! threatening 34 Qe3+. The simple point of Sadler's improvement is that 32 Qb7, threatening Qxh7 mate, allows Rxf8.

32 Nxg6+ Kg7 33 Qc7+ Rf7 34 Qb6 a5! Now there is no defence to Nb4+. **35 Resigns.** So the game has lasted only three moves. The moral?

Always be suspicious of opening plans based on long tactical lines unproven in actual play.

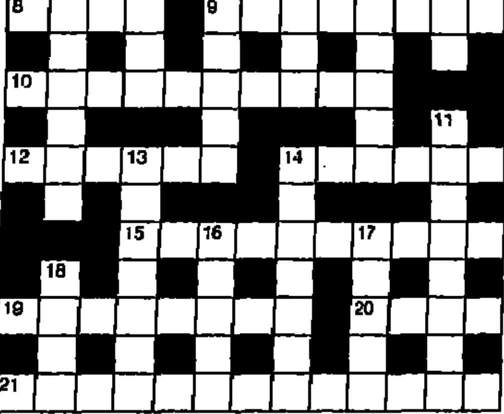
No 2514



A challenge to your chess detection skills by R Turnbull (The Problemist 1993). This is the position after White's (not Black's) eighth move. Can you reconstruct the game so far?

No 2513: 1 a7 Qxa7 2 Rd7 Nxd7 3 Bd5+ Rf7 4 Qg6+ Kh8 5 Bxf7 mates or wins the queen.

Quick crossword no. 409



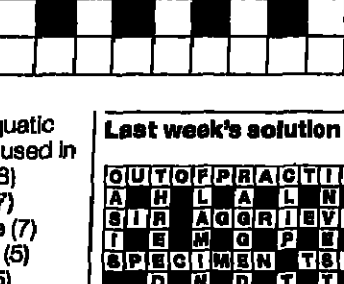
Across

1 Selfless person of parable (4,9)
8 Revise (4)
9 Poisonous (8)
10 Beggar (American) (10)
12 Writer (6)
14 Old copper — fruit-knife (6)
15 Monaco town and casino (5,5)
19 Plan — to raise interest (8)
20 Prod (4)
21 Disclose confidential material (5,3,5)

Down

2 Artillery (8)
3 Trench — last place to fight? (5)
4 Go ahead — give someone money (7)
5 Abolish (5)
6 Plunge into liquid (7)
7 Adjoin (4)
11 Pelt of aquatic mammal used in clothing (8)
13 Corrupt (7)
14 Go before (7)
16 Darkness (5)
17 Plentiful (5)
18 Cut — price bargain? (4)

Last week's solution



Bridge Zia Mahmood

THE Premier League, Britain's top bridge event — which is used as the basis for selection of national teams — had a more exciting finish than looked possible after the early stages.

Paul Hackett's team of himself and Tony Forrester, the twins Jason and Justin Hackett, and Tom Townsend playing with David Mossop, carried what looked like an unassailable lead into the final weekend of three matches. But Michelle Brunner's team — John Holland, Bill Hirst, Mike Hassett, John Armstrong and Danny Davies — put up a terrific fight, beating Hackett by 54 IMPs in their head-to-head encounter.

Though the greater experience of the Hackett team prevailed in the final round, this was an excellent performance by Michelle and her squad. The winning team will represent Great Britain in the European Union Championships in Italy later this year.

This was one of the more amusing deals from the Premier League. If you're one of those who believe that modern expert bidding will usually lead to the same contract being played at different tables in a match, you may be a little surprised at the developments below. Take the North cards:

♠A83 ♥AK94 ♦AQJ765 ♣None

Your opponents are vulnerable, you are not, and after a pass from East and South, West opens the bidding with one club on your right. You have an easy double, to which partner responds with two clubs — a cue bid, showing some values and some doubt about which suit is best. You express your extra strength with a jump to three diamonds, and partner produces 3NT. What call do you make? North pressed on with a further cue bid of four clubs.

When South bid four hearts, North simply jumped to six hearts, trusting that, if a diamond finesse were needed, the opening bidder would have the king. If you bid like that, you have to play them well — move into the South seat and see if you can find a successful route to 12 tricks on the unfriendly lead of the three of hearts (see table right).

As far as I can see, the only way to make this ambitious slam is to win the opening lead with dummy's ace of hearts, then play a small diamond and ruff it with the queen. Play a spade to the ace and ruff another diamond with the jack. Now play a low trump to dummy's nine(!) and draw West's last trump with the king. Cash the diamonds and finish by ducking a spade to West's singleton king, making the last two tricks with dummy's remaining trump and your own queen of spades.

	North ♠ A 8 3 ♥ A K 9 4 ♦ A Q J 7 6 5 ♣ None	
West ♠ K 4 ♥ 10 8 3 ♦ K 4 2 ♣ A Q 10 6 2		East ♠ J 10 6 2 ♥ 7 5 ♦ 10 9 8 3 ♣ J 5 3
	South ♠ Q 9 7 5 ♥ Q J 6 2 ♦ None ♣ K 9 8 7 4	

This complex line of play was, understandably, not found by South at the table, and the slam failed by two tricks. This was a pity, because in the other room the bidding had been rather less ambitious. West opened with one club. North overcalled with one diamond, and everybody passed! At this table, declarer was not tested in the play. ©

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Letter from Uzbekistan Jennifer Balfour

Flights of fancy

THERE was pizza for lunch today. Not quite pizza as we know it but a very good try. Not that the local people particularly appreciated the effort. Pizza has never really played a significant role in the cuisine of Central Asia. However, for the handful of foreigners aboard, this one small step represented a giant leap forward for Uzbekistan Airways.

I must be one of the few people in the world for whom the thought of school lunches, hospital food and in-flight meals produces a flurry of excitement. The Uzbekistan Airways' internal flight experience, however, has always left me feeling rather cold. Of course there is no earthly reason why any gastronomic stops at all should be pulled out for those rich enough to avoid the discomfort of a bumpy 12-hour ride to our city. We've surely had our reward. But ever since I enjoyed a British Airways three-course meal on the one hour flight from London to Belfast I have been reluctant to settle for anything less, and the plastic beaker of flat mineral water we have grown used to on Uzbekistan Airways' answer to Aeroflot has been nothing short of disappointing.

But today there was a flicker of hope in the air. Not only were we served an oblong slice of pizza (albeit cold), but it came with an array of drinks pushed by a smiling hostess on a mobile trolley.

Uzbekistan is the only one of the five Central Asian republics to have really gone to town on its airline following independence. Not only have their old Soviet planes been spruced up, but new Airbuses and Boeings have been brought in. Apart from a couple of minor setbacks when one plane was impounded at Manchester airport for non-payment of fees and another landed upside down on a Delhi runway (with no loss of life), in six short years they have done pretty well.

The first time I set foot on one of their planes five years ago I was ordered by a plump, heavily befreckled hostess to "Go!" and "Sit down!" Clutching evidence of a no smoking allocation in my hand I timidly ventured to inquire whether it was still available. Again I was told "Sit down!". I sat.

According to Uzbek custom the main course is served when everyone is full — or that is how it has always appeared to me. Tables are lavishly strewn with sweetmeats and guests are force-fed until bursting. Only then the real food ceremoniously appears. Not to be outdone, Uzbekistan Airways tried the same trick on us. We were stuffed full and only when we had given up all hope or inclination for a main course, did it finally appear.

These days things have changed and mostly for the better. But there is still room for improvement of customer relations and a few minor adjustments on the content and style of the in-flight magazine.

Communists were never slow to propagate their own ideology and achievements, and this newly-formed independent republic has avidly grasped the baton. A random dip into any issue will uncover a host of heavily massaged facts and figures about the emerging nation and accolades to the dare-devil heroes who man the skies. As international routes are added to the burgeoning repertoire, each successive venture is covered lavishly with praise heaped on those who have achieved another aerodynamic milestone for their country.

But it was still rather a shock one day to read in the magazine that the Frankfurt-based tutors of those very same heroes manning my Tashkent-bound plane had only relinquished the reins the previous week and allowed them to fly independently. Balanced high above the world it was little consolation to be presented with all the details of a tentative maiden voyage.

Had I been travelling a few months later following the company's first transatlantic flight, I would have found a whole page devoted to the escapade. I would have been regaled with accounts of "skilful management of a difficult route, special skills of navigation and communication only recently acquired." This coupled with the chairman's New Year wish to all his customers that there be as many landings as take-offs, I decided that this light read was definitely not for the faint-hearted.

Martin Pickersgill and some of the frogs whose identities are under the hammer PHOTO: TIM SMITH

Nameless frogs gain identity – at a price

Barry Hugill

IN THE arcane world of frogs, Martin Pickersgill is well known. He even has a frog named after him — Hyperolius Pickersgilli Raw or Pickersgill's Reed Frog — an honour accorded to the discoverers of new species.

Now he is planning to create some ripples in the pond by holding a "name the frog" auction, giving others the chance to buy into posterity.

Last year he discovered a further nine unidentified frogs. So far they have no names, but Mr Pickersgill is hoping to rectify that with his auction. "In 100 years, when everyone has forgotten Noel Gallagher and Jeffrey Archer, my frog will still be around. That makes me very proud."

He wants the money to fund an expedition to South Africa in search of an apelike hominid which he says he saw as a child.

For the moment he is broke, jobless and living in one of the seediest districts of Leeds with jars of pickled frogs.

A spokeswoman for the Linnaean Society (named after Carl Linnaeus, the scientist who devised the nomenclature system for plant and animal species) thought the idea of an auction "strange" and said: "The scientific establishment will not be very happy."

That is not likely to upset Mr Pickersgill. He is not part of any establishment and hasn't even got a degree. "I was brought up in South Africa and hated school. I got married young and had kids so I had to get a job. I worked as a clerk and never got round to formal study."

In 1982 he heard a frog with a "strange voice" and discovered his vocation. "They are marvellous creatures. I can sit by a swamp and hear 25 species. They all speak in a different way."

The South African trip will be to find what he calls the "missing link" — an ape-like creature known as the tokoloshe in Bantu folklore, 3ft to 4ft tall but with the strength of 10 men.

"Respectable scientists won't look for it because when you talk about the missing link people think you are nuts. But I've got to find it. I know there is something there."

A Country Diary

Richard Mabey

NORTH NORFOLK: The balmy south-west winds made the afternoon feel more like May. But the birds were in a defiantly winter mood. As we walked towards the shore, we saw a flock of small finches looping over the shingle sea-defences. It was a very tight assembly, with the individual birds flying as if they were connected by elastic. Through binoculars they revealed themselves as a band of some hundred snow buntings, looking, as they should, like a flurry of snowflakes. They put down on the shingle and began feeding. So good was their camouflage against the stony beach that they were quite invisible to the naked eye. A few of the males were already in their full black-and-white breeding plumage, but most of the flock could best be described as tortoiseshell.

At dusk we reached Holkham, where I'd heard of extraordinary gatherings of pink-feet geese. Sure enough perhaps 10,000 were massing on the grazing marshes before flying to roost. Their skirling calls became more and more excited as new bands winged in to join them. Then suddenly they rose, pealing off towards the north, like a grey blizzard against the dark pines.

Notes & Queries Joseph Harker

WHO invented playing cards and what is the origin of the suits?

PLAYING cards were invented by the Chinese before AD1000. They reached Europe around 1360, not directly from China but from the Mameluke empire of Egypt. The history of suitmarks demonstrates a fascinating interplay between words, shapes and concepts. The Mameluke suits were goblets, gold coins, swords, and polo-sticks. Polo being then unknown in Europe, these were transformed into batons or staves, which, together with swords, cups and coins, are still the traditional suitmarks of Italian and Spanish cards.

Fifteenth-century German card-makers experimented with suits vaguely based on Italian ones, eventually settling for acorns, leaves, hearts and bells (hawk-bells), which still remain in use. Around 1480 the French started producing playing-cards by means of stencils, and simplified the German shapes into *trèfle* (clover), *pique* (pike-heads), *coeur* (hearts), and *carreau* (paving tiles). English card-makers used these shapes but varied the names.

Spade (pique) may reflect the earlier use of Spanish suitmarks, from *espadas* meaning swords, and clubs are what the Spanish suit of staves actually look like. Diamond is not only the shape of the paving tile, but may perpetuate connotations of wealth from the older suit of coins. — *David Parlett, Streatham, London*

IT IS often said that the only man-made object visible from space is the Great Wall of China. How can this be so since despite its obvious length it is narrow?

THE Great Wall of China cannot be seen from space. However, due to duststorms a clear line is often visible from space where the dust meets the barrier of the Wall, so the astronauts can see its exact position. — *Martin Lewis, Bradford, West Yorkshire*

WHAT does the tooth fairy do with all the children's teeth she collects?

GROWING up in Australia we were told that the tooth fairy takes them into the heavens and turns them into stars. — *Susan Hickford, Hamburg, Germany*

SHE re-inserts them into the gums of newborn babies, of course! — *Judy Ferguson, Gawler, South Australia*

WHO gave the world's first benefit concert and what was it in aid of?

THE first benefit concert of the Live Aid sort was The Concert For Bangladesh on August 1, 1971, given in support of orphan children. The two shows at Madison Square Garden in New York City were organised by George Harrison and featured Eric Clapton, Bob Dylan, Leon Russell, Ravi Shankar, Ringo Starr and Harrison himself, among others. A live recording sold well. The concert was filmed, but most of the cameramen smoked too many joints and much of the footage was out-of-focus and unusable. — *Ash Baker, Fukuchiyama, Kyoto, Japan*

WHAT is the longest word with no recurring letters?

AMBIDEXTROUSLY, which has 14 letters.

I challenge Jonathan Brazier (March 1) and his authority, Richard Lederer's Crazy English. My Oxford English Dictionary contains neither uncopyrightable nor dermatoglyphs. It doesn't even contain isogram. — *John Dietrich, Harare, Zimbabwe*

Any answers?

HOW did Action Man get that scar on his face? — *James O'Malley, London*

WE OFTEN hear people described as "intellectuals". I would like to be one. Can this be achieved by reading selected books? If so, which? — *Syd Davis, Banwell, Somerset*

HOW do I become a UN weapons inspector? — *David Ewart, Prestolee, Manchester*

Answers should be e-mailed to weekly@guardian.co.uk, faxed to 0171/+44171-242-0985, or posted to The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ. The Notes & Queries Website is at http://nq.guardian.co.uk/



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Three tiers for desire

THEATRE
Michael Billington

IF ONLY, mused Graham Greene in The Quiet American, it were possible to love without injury. Alan Ayckbourn's **Things We Do For Love** at London's Gielgud theatre exposes the vanity of that hope. Love, it implies, invariably involves cruelty, pain and humiliation. The extraordinary thing is that Ayckbourn, in his own best play of the decade, handles a potentially tragic theme with a rueful comic zest.

As so often, Ayckbourn extends his range both thematically and physically. The split-level action takes place in a London house divided into three flats (excellent set by Roger Glossop). In the main area is Barbara: a precise, solitary 40-year-old unrequitedly devoted to her powerhouse boss. Renting the flat upstairs is her old school chum Nikki, who has emerged from a violent marriage to live with a gentle-seeming Scottish oceanographer, Hamish. And, in the basement, is postman/handyman Gilbert, for whom Barbara is an object of sexual fantasy.

Like the set, the action exists on multiple levels. On one, Ayckbourn suggests love is a hopelessly enslaving dream: both Nikki and Gilbert idolise the desiccated Barbara, just as she entertains deluded fantasies about her heartless boss. But, on another level, Ayckbourn implies that real love involves debasement and degradation. The test comes when Barbara and Hamish dive into bed with each other and inflict unspeakable pain, quite literally, on themselves and others.

Ayckbourn's virtue is that he tells the unflinching truth. His precious gift is for making his points through laughter and action: life in the upstairs flat is bizarrely cut off at knee-level, as in a Bresson movie, while downstairs the oppressed Gilbert is always helplessly horizontal.

Ayckbourn also creates a devastating character in Barbara, whom Jane Asher, in the performance of her life, endows with a fierce anger betokening an unclaimed sensuality. Asked by Hamish why she objects so strenuously to vegetarianism, she replies "It just sort of generally irritates me" with a comically disproportionate vehemence; yet Asher also suggests the pathos of a woman who desperately wants, yet is also terrified of, love. Serena Evans as her ditzy chum, Steven Pacey as the hairy Scotsman, and Barry McCarthy as the postman who yearns, all too literally, to get into Barbara's knickers also give impeccable performances in Ayckbourn's own production. This memorably bruising comedy is a Private Lives for the nineties.

Lyn Gardner adds: The Jesuits say that a child that comes to be educated with them before the age of seven will be theirs for life. But it is parents, particularly mothers, who have the prior claim in Canadian Judith Thompson's remarkable, nervy play **I Am Yours**, at London's Royal Court Upstairs, about madness and motherhood, sibling rivalry and childhood memory. It is a drama to send a shiver up your spine: long, dense, difficult and full of relationships in which love proves as damaging as lack of affection.

For Dee and her sister Mercy — always the less bright, less beautiful, less favoured child — the key to an emotional prison has been lost in the unspecified events of a disturbed childhood and a guilt-ridden relationship with their mother.

Now grown up and teetering on the edge of a breakdown, Dee fails even to recognise her sister when she turns up unexpectedly. Perhaps it has something to do with the fact that Dee is embarrassed to have been found having a sexual encounter with the janitor, Toilane, a certain loser. Dee's ensuing pregnancy precipitates a crisis in which ties of love and loyalty from the past bind like a noose in the present.

What makes this play so special is not just its emotional daring, but its fluid, slippery structure, in which the conscious and unconscious exist side by side, characters share dreams, and objects and words become recurring symbols of childhood fears that have been carried over into adulthood, with damaging consequences.

Thompson's writing can stab your heart and make you laugh out loud at the same time. In an excellent cast I shall long treasure the grim comedy of Kerry Fox's blousy, needy Mercy confiding that she wished for a brain tumour for her birthday in the vain hope of becoming the centre of attention. It is an image that, like the play itself, is at once shocking, funny and true.



Mother love . . . Madonna's paeans to a higher consciousness have left her credibility undamaged

From material to ethereal

NEW RELEASE
Caroline Sullivan

THIS is how important Madonna still is: she can do her new single on the televised National Lottery draw and wake up the next morning with credibility undamaged. Even the Lottery's world-class tackiness can't sully her.

So, nice to find the charisma in working order, but can she still make decent records? Well, yes. It was clear after the sexcentricity of the last studio LPs, Erotica and Bedtime Stories, that the next would have to be markedly different — and Ray Of Light is.

She's done what superstars at a crossroads do — found religion. As the most famous Catholic in showbiz she already had it, but the birth of her daughter awakened, she claims, deeper spiritual needs. "Obviously, that was a big catalyst for me. It took me on a search for answers to questions I'd never asked myself before. What was I going to say to my daughter about what's really important in life?"

She's been studying the Kabbalah and Hinduism, and Ray Of Light is the result of what she calls her "metamorphosis". The title itself attests to the change in her life and each track endorses the idea: Material Girl has become Ethereal Girl.

One vainly searches for evidence of bodily appetites in these homages to higher consciousness. Even common-or-garden love songs like "The Power of Goodbye" and "To Have and Not to Hold" are phrased with a delicate disregard for the things that used to keep her going.

The predominant mood is questing, quizzical, full of a new mother's adoration and a grown woman's wisdom. She even, on "Shanti/Ashtangi", has a Kula Shaker moment, singing entirely in Sanskrit. (One hesitates to knock such a heartfelt gesture, but Westerners always sound so earnest when they try to do Eastern. Never mind that it's a pretty good ditty, full of musky layers of drums and bells. I blame the baby.)

But her smartest move was calling in English ambient pioneer William Orbit to produce. Madonna no longer sets pop trends, but she recognises a good one when she hears it, and by allowing Orbit his trance-happy tracks, she's ended up with a wholly [illegible] record.

The first [illegible] "Drowned World/Substitute For Love" and "Swim" [illegible] right in. The latter has the dreamy feel of moving underwater, and is one of Madonna's best vocals, its flowing quality (the result of intensive coaching) making the best of her improved but still limited voice. She's nothing less than delicious on "To Have and Not to Hold", which is rendered by its delicate beats and just-perceptible bells the prettiest track. "Little Star", dedicated to her offspring, is just understated enough not to make you retch.

The slow-motion quality to most tracks makes the few uptempo ones feel intrusive. The title number and "Skin", which fairly whirl you round the dance floor, are probably necessary to keep you from nodding off, but they jar none the less. But by and large, the girl's done well, on a record that will become one of her benchmarks.

Madonna: Ray Of Light (WEA)

Television is bad for your health

TELEVISION
Nancy Banks-Smith

IT WAS a good joke to show **Trust Me, I'm a Doctor** (BBC2) and **The Life and Crimes Of William Palmer** (ITV) on the same night.

As Sherlock Holmes pointed out, the best murderers are doctors. They have the nerve, the knowledge and — though Holmes forgot to mention this — a very eerie sense of humour.

For instance, I remember Dr Phil Hammond and Dr Tony Gardner (who called themselves Struck Off And Die) seeing in the New Year from a hospital. As the customary New Year baby was taking its time, they gave us a tour of the morgue. I rest my little black bag.

Phil Hammond presents Trust Me, I'm A Doctor. Touching on obesity, his finger leaving a fetching dimple, he named the guilty party. It is television. "Watching TV intently is about as close as most of us get to death, metabolically speaking. Temperature and pulse rate both fall. An American study showed that you burn 13 per cent fewer calories watching TV than staring at a blank wall." (Yes, well, that is American TV, of course.)

"Abandon", he urged, "the remote control. Walking to the telly and back to change channels adds up to three miles a year."

Trust Me, I'm A Doctor, now in its second series, is a useful, cheerful, skimming-along show. The serious stuff was a new vaccine treatment for melanoma. The principle is to rouse the body's own immune system to rally and repel boarders, and the success rate is 50:50.

He is not sniffy about alternative medicine and recommended, on a viewer's suggestion, cranberry juice for cystitis. *E.coli* hates it, and I'm not surprised.

There was a mischievous report that, if you are passionate about fine food, there is a 5 per cent chance you are brain-damaged. This has no possible relevance to any name that springs immediately to mind.

Next week, one for the lads: how to look after your tackle. Let me guess: always wipe it with an oily rag before you put it away?

Dr William Palmer is notorious as The Rugeley Poisoner, which is rough on Rugeley. It is an unusual setting for a period drama and well recreated here. The middle of England . . . the middle class . . . the middle of the century.

Palmer, played with a nice light touch by Keith Allen, was born a Georgian, so horses, wenching, drink and debt came naturally. To pay for his pleasures he poisoned his wife, his mother-in-law and several of his infant children. As Yorkshire's publicity entertainingly puts it: "He went just that bit too far." This tale of overkill is written by Glen Chandler, best known for his Grand Guignol scripts for Taggart. (When Mr Bladon, a creditor, is death-rattling his last, Palmer leans over and asks him for a hot tip for the Oaks.)

How Do You Want Me? (BBC2), by Simon Nye, is delightful and unexpectedly topical too. A townie marries a turkey farmer's daughter and goes to live in the country. It's not the past that's a foreign country. It's the *country* that's a foreign country. They do things differently there. In Somerset once I saw a sheep holding a dustbin lid while another sheep butted it. I understand it's a traditional country sport.

Dylan Moran, who plays the townie, is an award-winning stand-up comic, hence his gorgeous delivery of an interminable, dirty and unappreciated joke. He is new to drama and your jaw just drops when you know that. This is a first-class bit of natural acting, with double distinction in sleepy-eyed mumbling.

He is rejected by the country like a foreign body. Which he is. As he says to his unrelenting father-in-law, "Would this all be better if I was English? Would you like me then? I can be English, you know." And, giving every U it's full, acetic, tooth-peeling potential, he added *"Tiffin! Where's my tissues? What's the gooseberry situation?"*

Having established that a few of his father-in-law's unfavourite things are Paddy Ashdown, the Ramblers Association and beards, he pretends to accept a £20,000 bribe to go. And sends £5,000 to the Ramblers Association, £200 to the Lib Dems and £10,000 to the Beard Museum in Leeds.

My eyes misted over thinking of the innocent joy at the Beard Museum. I think that was why they misted over.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
March 15 1998

Off-white, but never off-colour

ART
Adrian Searle

THE canvases are a more or less uniform off-white. A dense, greyish, sepulchral china-clay white. The canvas has been rucked and folded and accidentally pleated, the puckers and creases glued and sealed-up with some kind of dried-up, off-white substance that flattens out the shadows and draws you up close. Less like artist's pigment than grouting, caked poultice or gruel, the kaolin and glue with which Piero Manzoni soaked his canvases fills the folds of the material. Some are stitched or overlaid patchworks, similarly soaked and dried, while others, the earliest, are more like walls. Some are pebble-dashed with gravel and little whitened stones, or moonscaped with an acne of little polystyrene balls. Manzoni called these works achromes: they are not so much monochromes as no chromes at all. They are barely paintings. They are mute. They say nothing.

This, you might say, was chic, cutting-edge Italian art in about 1960, but hardly the kind of thing one would expect for the relaunch show of the rebuilt, remodelled Serpentine Gallery in London, which opened its doors to the public last week after an 18-month refit.

Manzoni's achromes cover the walls. Other frames contain furry hanks of glass fibre, great florid fun-fur gouts of it, like explosions in a beard factory. Some other sorry things stand around in vitrines — receipt stubs, perished, shrivelled-up red balloons which were inflated with the artist's breath, and broken eggs stamped with Manzoni's inky thumb-print. The eggs are the residue of what amounted to an early performance piece: Manzoni signed hardboiled eggs with his fingerprint, then invited the audience to eat them. It was a show that lasted less than an hour.

There are some plinths on the floor. One turns you into a living sculpture if you stand on it (prefiguring the living sculptures of Gilbert and George by a decade), while another, dated 1961, is, according to the artist, the plinth on which the world rests. The inverted lettering on the base reads Socle du Monde (base of the world), and is dedicated to Galileo. And here, to cap it all, is Manzoni's *piece de resistance*, the notorious little tins containing the artist's own shit, canned fresh and neatly labelled "Merda d'artista", and price-pegged against the exchange rate of gold.

Manzoni's notorious tinned excrement, Merda d'artista

This last work is liable to turn some critics blue in the face. The public, on the other hand, is largely more inquisitive and more generous. You can read the potted poo in several ways. Nowadays we might see it as a dispirited, glumly ironic joke on art as a commodity (why, these days you can even can your faeces and call it art . . .), but it might also be seen as a Midas-like play on transubstantiation (artists turn anything, even their excess, into art), or as a game about artistic secrets (does the tin contain what it says it does? It does).



Body of art . . . Piero Manzoni signing his living art in Milan, 1961

Base materiality, magic and intimations of spirituality co-exist in Manzoni's work. His work is earthy, robust, and fundamentally Catholic. It can also be genuinely funny.

Personally, I think the Manzoni show is great, and a clever show with which to re-open the Serpentine. Apart from anything else, the off-whites of Manzoni's achromes complement the perfect sheen of the freshly rollered new walls. With their delicately cast shadows, the achromes provide a perfect opportunity to show off the subtleties of the state-of-the-art lighting system. They don't compete with elegant skylights and double-glazed french windows, nor does his work mess up the space with some kind of architecturally challenging "intervention". But Manzoni does more than decorate the space. There are other, better reasons for the Serpentine to show a young Italian artist who died prematurely in his studio in Milan in 1963, at the age of 29, an artist whose mature output (if we can call it that) spans a period of about seven years.

Sometimes an early death can be a good career move for an artist; in Manzoni's case it was simply tragic. He had an inquiring, darkly witty intelligence. He also designated people as artworks (the receipt stubs in the vitrine are for certificates accrediting them as such). Manzoni once signed Umberto Eco's wrist with indelible ink, rendering him a living art work. The young thinker didn't wash his arm for weeks. The ink wore off, but Manzoni's aura never did.

Piero Manzoni's achromes prefigure minimalism, but they are also distant cousins to the early work of Jasper Johns, and demonstrate a process of disengagement from informalist, tachiste painting towards something more evanescent, cerebral, even spiritual. Taken alongside his other projects (Manzoni was never beholden to a single medium or a way of working), his development is nothing less than a demonstration of the increasing confusion we've got ourselves into regarding art and its objects. For Manzoni, this struggle with the status of objects and ideas, with art itself, became not so much a problem as a poem, a kind of conversation.

Manzoni's achromes come closest to the monochromes of Yves Klein, whom Manzoni met in Paris in 1961. He said to Klein: "You are the monochrome blue and I am the monochrome white, we must work together." They never did. Yet parallels exist in their work, not least to do with the dematerialisation of the artwork, the disappearance of the object into the realm of the invisible and the imagination.

MANZONI'S art is deceptively direct. It is cerebral. It is often very elegant and sophisticated, and sometimes very beautiful. Projects such as his wish to draw a series of lines whose length would equal the circumference of the world are both grandiose and surprisingly modest, at once futile and inspirational. That, perhaps, is as good a definition of art as any.

Manzoni was a pivotal force in various artistic and intellectual movements, anti-movements, groups and magazine ventures. The excitement of the growing internationalism in Italian art and culture in the late 1950s and early 1960s makes the hype of the current London scene look like an insignificant blip. It seems that there was more at stake then, more chances to be taken, more uncharted territory. And ambitions were greater too. The Manzoni show (until April 26) opens as a challenge to younger art: what, one might ask, is left to be done?

With the best Will in the world

CINEMA
Richard Williams

AS TOLSTOY might have said, had he been born in Hollywood a century later, it's hard to find a new angle for a feelgood movie. All unhappy films seem to be unhappy in their own way. Despair, violence, degradation — they write their own plot-lines, each of them different. One tale of redemption through virtue, on the other hand, is much the same as another. And strictly in terms of originality, just about the only thing going for Good Will Hunting is its intelligence.

In the usual way, the credits call it "a film by Gus Van Sant". It isn't. Not in the usual auteur sense, anyway. Van Sant certainly directed Good Will Hunting, and very effectively too, but it's almost impossible to detect the explicit influence of the hand that shaped Drugstore Cowboy, My Own Private Idaho and To Die For. That's because the controlling intellect belongs to someone else, and Van Sant was wise enough to recognise the fact. Improbable as it may seem, the intellect in question belongs to the hunk who plays the lead.

Matt Damon first wrote Good Will Hunting in the form of a short story, as part of a creative-writing project. It's the tale of a young man from a disadvantaged background who turns out to be a genius. Will Hunting is an orphan, a victim of childhood abuse. Now he's part of a gang of shiftless boys who live in South Boston, a poor Irish district, where they go to work on construction sites and in auto repair shops, drink in blue-collar bars, work out, watch sports, tell dirty jokes, eat junk food and get into fights.

Will already has a criminal record: violence, car theft. Thanks to his parole officer, he's working as a janitor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. But his brain is wired up in a pattern of its own. He has a photographic memory, and the analytical gift to go with it. When maths professor Gerald Lambeau (Stellan Skarsgard) chalks up a problem and gives his class the rest of the term to solve it, Will lays down his squeegee and completes it overnight. When he does it again, Lambeau tracks him down.

But Will isn't interested in being saved. Something inside him resists it. He's happier riding round with his gang, using his ability to shut down arrogant Harvard boys and impress their girls, or picking an idiotic fight with an old school enemy and landing himself with an assault charge. As part of a deal with the authorities, Lambeau promises to enlist psychiatric help. After the top-dollar shrinks get nowhere, he turns to an old college room-mate, Sean McGuire (Robin Williams), who takes time out from his humble community-college duties to establish a rapport with the boy.

The remainder of the film is a closely-argued examination of the nature of failure and success. Is the ambitious, womanising, prize-winning Lambeau a success? Is the underachieving McGuire a failure? The real question, posed by Lambeau and by Chuckie (Ben Affleck), Will's best friend, is whether the possession of a talent comes with the obligation to use it.

Williams and Skarsgard play off each other beautifully, the former with a perfectly-modulated performance that is all the stronger for its restraint. But Damon is unquestionably the star. He can brood without seeming brain-dead, and he produces the fireworks in several rivetting monologues. The best of them is a rapid-fire breakdown of the real reasons for going to war with a country like Iraq, containing more sense than anything to be read in the leader columns, and better jokes.

The whole film has this unspoilt quality. I don't think I'm imagining a sense of integrity that is rooted in the writing and which seems to have flourished in a co-operative setting. It was Affleck who helped Damon, a childhood friend, turn the story into a screenplay, and who showed it to Kevin Smith, the director of Clerks and Chasing Amy. Smith lent his support. Casey Affleck, Ben's brother, who plays one of the gang, brought it to Van Sant's attention. And something about the finished product reassures the audience that the story has stayed true to the vision of the people who dreamed it up, that it has not been compromised by the values and the process of Hollywood.



Matt Damon takes the lead, and the credit, in Good Will Hunting

Many individual elements of the film make a strong impression. Affleck's Chuckie is generous and confident. Minnie Driver is a vivid presence as the posh, smart, English undergraduate who falls in love with Will and helps to determine his destiny. And there is always something to look at in the contrast between the colourful clutter of the working-class district and the manicured lawns of academe. The camera of Jean-Yves Escoffier prowls stealthily behind the heads of people in bars and studies, taking to the air for a brief but magical night-time view of Boston, with Fenway Park floodlit for a baseball game.

The only reason I can imagine for not giving Good Will Hunting the maximum recommendation is a disreputable one, to do with it being uncool to endorse something so virtuous. But this is a film with a real soul and a good heart to go with its intelligence and energy. How often can you say that?

Blight in Arcadia

Penelope Fitzgerald

The Sandglass
by Romesh Gunesekera
Granta 288pp £9.99

THE title suggests that time is running out for Gunesekera's Sri Lanka. This outstanding novel is less lyrical, but much more substantial, than his Reef, and it is sick, or at least sad, at heart. Pearl is an elderly Sri Lankan woman, living in a rent-controlled flat in London. Her father was a liberal-minded doctor with a practice near Colombo. She "grew up revelling in Father Brown mysteries and English romances under mango trees in secluded gardens". Never would she understand the pursuit of money for its own sake. Jason Ducal, who came courting her, would arrive on his bicycle "with just one finger on the handlebar and a flower in his other hand".

Pearl was disconcerted, after their marriage, to find that her husband was obsessed with making a fortune. This didn't mean, for him, the tedious route of examinations for public services. Within a year he had got himself a good position with a British tea firm.

Then in 1948, the year of independence, "while the pundits argued about the colours of the free flag", Jason bought the house of his aspirations, a house which was already called Arcadia. Unluckily it was almost entirely surrounded by the property of the Vatunas family. The Vatunases, now such uncomfortably close neighbours, were "a form of destiny" which would infect all the Ducals, including Pearl, her daughter Anoja and her sons, Prins and Ravi, with the "disease of the landed". The Vatunas family bought into cocoa and cinnamon, then joined the land grab of the 1880s. Their presiding genius, when the book opens, is Esra Vatunas, a gaunt old predator whose know-how is inherited by his son Dino. Meanwhile Jason (no more flowers, no more bicycle) is working behind closed doors. He has plans to revive the manufacture of arrack, driven off the market by imported whisky. With this in mind he wants to buy a small, run-down distillery business. But so, too, does Esra.



Gunesekera: outstanding follow up to Reef PHOTOGRAPH: ANTONIO OLMOS

Gunesekera starts out, then, with what seems a familiar enough subject, the confrontation between two families, and a time-honoured device, too, for telling the story. It's pieced together by Chip, a friend of Pearl's son, Prins. Chip is the faithful narrator with, apparently, no interests of his own. But Gunesekera must have felt that he needed these reassuringly old-fashioned methods, since he has disturbing things to tell.

At one point, Jason, in total perplexity about his business (he wants to make money, but also to do good), goes to consult a self-proclaimed holy man, Srijan, much respected in this land of free faiths. Srijan asks him what he was about to do before he paid this visit. Jason replies that he had been going to walk on the sands and listen to the ocean. "So do it." And Jason goes to the beach, where he has always before found total darkness, "shadows without light, and the roar of an invisible sea. It was a place where vision could fail but the senses come alive". But that night he was disturbed by the glow of campfires, and people talking and moving along the whole curve of the shore.

How far, then, is Srijan's traditional wisdom to be trusted? And what consolation is there now, even in the darkness and the sea?

After Jason's violent death, a mystery which Chip can't solve, Pearl courageously leaves Sri Lanka for London, where she gradually grows softer, blinder, fatter, cooking huge quantities of buttery rice for her relatives and telling stories of the past. "The space around her was teeming with words; her whole life was woven with them." In this book the women are stronger than the men, and Pearl, who can hardly be bothered to go out, is the strongest of all. Steadfastly she refuses to go back to Sri Lanka. Her dreams are displaced, and so are those of her descendants. Ravi, her youngest, tries his luck in America, but turns around and comes back. "He said it as if he was describing a walk to the corner shop." At 30 years old, in his room in Pearl's flat, he commits suicide. Arjuna, Pearl's daughter, the smart secretary, dies in childbirth. Prins, her surviving son, is always on the move, the embodiment of restlessness. And she does not live quite long enough to see the birth of her great-granddaughter, Dawn.

All these people are in search of a lost paradise, or hope to create a new one. Sri Lanka itself is doubly threatened, by political violence and commercial exploitation.

Chip, the patient narrator, returns at the end of the story to Colombo. The taxi-driver doesn't even know the way to the old Vatunas' estates. When Chip does get there he finds them demolished, reduced to grey earth, "the graveyard of incurable dreams". "Incurable" has to be given its proper weight, but there is nothing left of Arcadia except the hoardings announcing the future luxury hotel, with a subterranean ice-rink and a Japanese snow-machine. And Chip stands there, longing to hear Prins, "or Pearl again, or the voice of the last of her displaced dreamline, Dawn, spin us forward from this hurt earth to a somehow better world".

If you would like to order The Sandglass at the special price of £12, contact CultureShop (see left)

Nursery crimes

Richard Webster

The Beast In the Nursery
Adam Phillips
Faber 133pp £14.99

ADAM PHILLIPS, child psychoanalyst and essayist, has a talent for titles. That the author of On Kissing, Tickling And Being Bored should call his latest collection of psychoanalytic meditations The Beast In The Nursery, seems fitting. For Freud himself certainly discovered a beast lurking in every nursery and made it clear that this beast had surprising sexual propensities. Indeed, in arriving at his theory of infantile sexuality, Freud assumed that children were full of desires which were, quite literally, "beastly".

His inspiration for this was the 19th century biological theory which maintained that children developed by recapitulating earlier phases of animal evolution. Since very primitive organisms had no penises and used the mouth as their reproductive organ, sex was supposed originally to be a kind of "higher eating". More complex organisms, such as reptiles and birds, practised a form of cloacal intercourse, described by the biologist Bölsche as "anus pressed against anus". Only with the advent of crocodiles and other saurians did animals really begin to get down to it and replace these primitive sexual modes with the penis and vagina.

If 19th century recapitulation theory was correct, as Freud assumed it to be, it followed that young children would rapidly evolve through primitive animal forms of sexuality before arriving at full genital sexuality. In keeping with this hypothesis Freud postulated that all children developed through an oral and an anal stage of sexuality before becoming phallic. A failure to progress normally through these stages might result in sexual "perversion".

Freud postulated that all children developed through oral and anal stages of sexuality

Yet, as a more cautious thinker might have anticipated, 19th century biological speculations about recapitulation proved not to be correct. Since a large part of the cathedral of psychoanalysis had actually been built on the shifting sands of these speculations it rapidly began to sink into its own foundations. Freud himself attempted to underpin his creation by stoically claiming that the 20th century biologists were "all wrong", but the cathedral has continued to tilt ever since.

For observers of what must count as one of the greatest intellectual disasters of the 20th century, common sense would seem to indicate that we should abandon Freud's folly and start again. But those who have found solace by worshipping within the cathedral have seen things rather differently. In a series of increasingly elaborate engineering projects they have attempted to salvage what has seemed to others unsalvageable.

Adam Phillips's latest book, like his earlier ones, belongs to this modern tradition of psychoanalytic revisionism. For sheer daring and imaginative boldness Phillips's contribution is without rival. For in it he has set out to restore Freud's theories about children and children's sexuality to the heart of psychoanalysis while offering only the most oblique intimation of what those theories actually are. One of the great advantages of this strategy is that he is able to turn traditional psychoanalytic doctrines almost on their head without this ever becoming obvious to his reader.

One of the distinctive characteristics of classical psychoanalysis was that it reflected the profound distrust of childhood which is part of our Judaeo-Christian inheritance. So much so that, as the Harvard psychologist David McClelland once observed, "to hear Anna Freud speak of the criminal tendencies of the one- and two-year-old is to be reminded inevitably of Calvinistic sermons on infant damnation". There was a difference, however: although the Freudian (or Kleinian) child was sadistic, sexually perverted and full of lust and rage, psychoanalysis maintained that all this was only natural. Children were therefore not to be regarded as sinful, and what Freud called their "ruthless egotism" would be curbed in the course of ordinary development.

In The Beast In The Nursery Adam Phillips casually peels Freud's positive estimation of childhood as "natural" away from the profoundly negative attitude which underlies it. Astonishingly the founder of psychoanalysis is thus introduced on the first page of the book as "a very late Romantic" who "found the passions and perplexities of the child exemplary". Much of the remainder of the book is a kind of sub-Blakean paean to "the child who psychoanalysis has mislaid . . . the child with an astonishing capacity for pleasure . . . with an unwilled relish of sensuous experience which often unsettles the adults who like to call it affection." But this child has not been mislaid by psychoanalysis for the simple reason that Freud never expounded such a vision of childhood in the first place.

Read as the autobiographical meditation of a father who has become enchanted by his own young daughter, The Beast In The Nursery is touching and, for fleeting moments at least, beautiful. Read, as it is intended to be, as a serious commentary on psychoanalysis, it is an extraordinary feat of intellectual self-deception.

One of the questions arising from the book concerns the fate of the beast which is announced in its title. At no point was I able to find any mention of the beast. Determined to track down the beast to its lair I submitted the title essay to yet another reading, scanning the pages anxiously for the word. At one point I thought I had found it. But on closer inspection it proved to be only a breast. No beast was within sight.

The theory of infantile sexuality has often been an embarrassment to psychoanalysis. This is not because it is untrue, which is merely an incidental inconvenience, but because it associates young children with bestial sexual desires. That one of the foremost contemporary apologists for psychoanalysis appears finally to have succeeded in banishing the beast from the nursery altogether will not endear him to his more traditional colleagues. But it will appeal to those who like their psychoanalysis tame.

Ireland as God's own melting pot

Terry Eagleton

The Lie of the Land
by Fintan O'Toole
Verso 172pp £15

IRELAND is in fashion these days. The music of U2, the belaurelled brows of Seamus Heaney: all this has shot the place to global prominence, along with a flourishing film industry known as Paddywood and a per capita wealth which has just overtaken Britain's for the first time in history. Planeloads of working-class Brits arrive in Dublin's trendy Temple Bar for a boozy weekend. American film stars have come to settle in the country, their love for the natives enhanced by the prospect of income-tax exemption for artists.

But there is a more subtle ... for this sudden celebrity. Traditionally, Ireland means migration, lost identity, the diffusion of a whole nation around the globe. It is logical that the former president of Ireland should now be United Nations Commissioner for Refugees. In the days before postmodernist theory, all this uprooting was thought to involve a good deal of pain.

Now, nothing is more positive than fractured selves and crossed borders, at least in the cultural studies departments. From this standpoint, rather than viewed from the drug-infested housing estates of Dublin and Cork, Ireland can be read as a vibrant paradigm of postmodernity. With the carnage in the north and a rash of clerical sex scandals in the south, the old certainties of church and nationalism have come tumbling down, leaving behind them a dynamic instability. Ireland is once again an archetype of everywhere, just as it was in the days of Joyce's Ulysses.

Fintan O'Toole is one of Ireland's most talented journalists, as well as a chief architect of this latest postmodern myth of Erin. In this collection of commentaries on Irish affairs, he rightly points out how the ... geography of the place has been transformed. The Irish coastline, he writes, is now "a thin membrane that lets in all the flotsam and jetsam of consumer culture and lets out a constant flow of people and capital". Yet despite its new-found prosperity, the country is still perched on the periphery of European space, along with Warsaw, Bucharest and Lisbon, whereas London and Edinburgh are to be classified with Nice and Rome. In a quick tour of Jesse James, Eugene O'Neill, John Ford and the Kennedys, O'Toole brilliantly explores the hybrid nature of Irish Americans, part oppressed Indians, part Tammany Hall colonialists. The great Irish contribution to politics, he points out, is not political ideas but the political machine itself.

There are equally perceptive pieces on the dismal state of the Irish Catholic Church, along with a coolly devastating portrait of the fallen chief, Charlie Haughey. What mars this scintillatingly intelligent journalism is the doctrinaire bias which informs it. In his postmodern way, O'Toole makes uprooting and emigration sound hip, which would have come as a surprise to my own ... Nobody ever told them that exile is "a form of self-dramatisation, the assumption of a role, the tailoring of one's personality to an alien audience".

Homesickness is now politically incorrect. O'Toole modishly assumes that the makeshift, the unstable and the open-ended are virtues in themselves, which those in Ireland doomed to flexitime and short-term contracts might have something to say about. The Irish have always been experts at plucking virtue out of necessity, turning failure into triumph, and this relentlessly upbeat version of a nation in deep trouble is no exception. The booming Irish economy is precariously dependent on a few foreign-owned, hi-tech enterprises and has left whole swathes of the country socially blighted. The emerald tiger, O'Toole comments excitedly, is "not so much on the prowl as on the razzle-dazzle". They used to think that about Southeast Asian tigers too.

As with most revolutions, this one is overhyped. The Catholic Church in Ireland may be dogged by squalid exposés, but the Irish are still probably the most dedicated church-attenders in the world. The place is still an overwhelmingly rural society, despite O'Toole's triumphalist claim elsewhere that rural Ireland no longer ... (Admittedly, that it has been transformed; but then so has Irish urban life, whose non-existence he has yet to proclaim.) It is a Dublin-centred view of the country, vaguely suggestive of one who has never clapped eyes on a cow.

Ireland is indeed caught at present between different belief-systems, but O'Toole's insistence on its "fluid, contradictory, elusive" nature begins to sound curiously like another version of the old enigmatic Erin of the mystical Yeats. In welcoming Ireland's new cosmopolitanism, he continues to see the place as somehow unique, just like the old nationalist mythology he disowns. If those myths were dangerously provincial and complacent, so in its different way is this euphoric cult of Ireland as God's own postmodern melting pot. It is as if contemporary Ireland is both everywhere and more so, blankly interchangeable with Birmingham and the Bronx yet still exerting a special fascination for its homegrown intellectuals, who never cease to jaw on into the small hours about themselves and their culture while the barman stands patiently by.

The international acclaim for Neil Jordan, Van Morrison and Roddy Doyle isn't quite the same thing as allowing the transnational corporations to walk all over you. After a bit ... are belatedly reaping the benefits of modernisation and nobody could begrudge them that. But modernity, in Ireland as elsewhere, means anxiety and deprivation, not just liberal values and box-office hits. It is odd that those committed to the value of contradiction rarely seem to recount both stories.

If you would like to order this book at the special price of £12 contact CultureShop (see page 28)

Paperbacks Nicholas Lezard

A Supposedly Fun Thing I'll Never Do Again, by David Foster Wallace (Abacus, £6.99)

WALLACE is the author of Infinite Jest, a novel which broaches 1,000 pages in tiny typeface; it's the kind of book a paperback reviewer dreads, and I have always felt guilty about leaving it alone for I suspect it of actually being good. So it's nice to be able to atone for my sin of omission by recommending this one.

This is a collection of essays and travel writing. The title piece is a 97-page description of a luxury Caribbean cruise, with 137 footnotes. This may well indicate a worrying tendency to prolixity on the author's part: but, trust me, by the end of it you want more. In it he displays a superb facility with language, in which digressions, footnotes, and footnotes appended to footnotes, accelerate towards an ... salvo of jokes.

He can use the word "neato" in a serious and illuminating essay on TV and literary culture without irritating, and the same applies elsewhere in his penchant for saying w/ and w/r/t instead of "with" and "with regard to". It's the kind of book you can't even put down while brushing your teeth. He's damn good. I take my hat off to him.

Invisible Republic, by Greil Marcus (Picador, £6.99)

GREIL MARCUS, surveyor of hidden projects and subliminal histories, has, as Bob Dylan himself puts it on the cover, "done it again". This tour through the American subconscious starts with the recording of the so-called "basement tapes", the songs Dylan recorded with the Hawks in the basement of his house. That not many people own copies of these recordings is not actually a problem with this book, for Marcus knows how to make unheard music come alive on the page (the intensity of his response to music is astonishing: you wonder how Marcus can listen to a halfway-decent album without passing out).

To be read more as fiction, or even poetry, than conventional critical exegesis (although he's damn good at that when he needs to be), this turns into an impressionistic history of the roots of American folk music, a history both magical and sinister. These roots come from pre-18th century British ballads, and the fruits extend up to Nirvana's song "Polly" on Nevermind. You will not look at the country the same way again.

Low Life, by Luc Sante (Granta, £7.99)

NEW YORK, as Sante points out in his introduction, is continually in the grip of neophilia: the "York" is vestigial, the "New" is the part of its name that does all the work. Which means that he must have had a hell of a time researching this book about its forgotten history, and particularly the last-chance areas of the Bowery and the Tenderloin: its dives, saloons, brothels, gambling joints, opium dens, gangs, bohemians, corrupt cops, politicos and swindlers.

There is an abundance of disreputable life in this book, to the extent that one can almost hear a honky-tonk piano being played in the background as one reads. It is also a salutary book for those who imagine that contemporary life is any more depraved than it was. "Rat-baiting was the premier betting sport of the 19th century," says Sante, backing up the assertion with the prices charged for admission: you could watch two human prizefighters bludgeon each other to jam for fifty cents, but watching a fox terrier take on more than five rats at a time would set you back $5. "Late in the century", he adds, "it briefly became popular to pit rats against men wearing heavy boots," and the very thought of hundreds of people paying to watch someone stomping up and down over a cock-pit-full of vermin puts contemporary queasiness about unsuitable entertainments into perspective.

Football FA Cup sixth round: Newcastle United 3 Barnsley 1

Geordies book dream ticket

Ian Ross at St James' Park

THE good folk of Newcastle may still harbour some reservations about the latest custodian of their dreams, Kenny Dalglish, but on Monday morning the fog on the Tyne could only barely conceal a city's growing sense of excitement.

After 24 years of underachievement, Newcastle United again find themselves within touching distance of an FA Cup final.

Barnsley began well in the game last Sunday, moving forward purposefully. There was no hint of intricacy, just the sensible and orthodox tactics demanded of the occasion. [illegible] bly have put them in front after nine minutes but in his haste to deliver what proved a wildly inaccurate shot, he seemed to overlook the fact that he was unmarked eight metres from goal.

It was to be a costly blunder, but Ward was not the only player in a red shirt to dig for gold and find only rubble. The fairy tale began to fray around the edges in the 17th minute when Newcastle's growing superiority manifested itself in the afternoon's opening goal.

Gary Speed's driven pass was knocked to his left by Robert Lee, leaving Temuri Ketsbaia with a relatively simple task of sliding home from 12 metres. To a man, Barnsley insisted that Ketsbaia was offside, a viewpoint backed up by television replays, but the referee Neil Barry was having none of it.

The game's competitive edge was to be further dulled just before the half-hour. Lee set Andreas Andersson scurrying away down the centre and, although the Swede overran the ball, he still managed to drive in a low shot that hit the legs of Barnsley's goalkeeper David Watson and rebounded to Speed who scored with some ease.

The second half was 11 minutes old when the Yorkshiremen claimed the goal that prefaced an enthralling finale. Martin Bullock, on as a substitute for Clint Marcelle, laid the ball into the path of Andy Liddell, who clipped in a rising drive.

As the tension built, both sides missed chances and the Barnsley defender Adrian Moses was sent off with 16 minutes remaining after picking up a second caution for a clumsy challenge on Alan Shearer.

The outcome was in the balance until the last seconds, when David Batty steered in a fabulous shot.

Aerial combat . . . Barnsley goalkeeper David Watson contests a cross with Newcastle striker Alan Shearer PHOTO: MICHAEL STEELE

Leeds United 0 Wolverhampton Wanderers 1

Goodman leader of the pack

David Lacey at Elland Road

THIS time it has taken a company of Wolves to give the FA Cup some real bite. By beating Leeds United at Elland Road last Saturday, Wolverhampton Wanderers have reawakened the possibility of a team from outside the Premiership reaching the final for the first time since the old Football League split up six years ago.

"This is the stuff that dreams are made of," said Don Goodman, who scored Wolves' winner eight minutes from the end. It was hardly an original thought and Goodman was presumably talking about the result rather than a largely scrappy match, but nobody could argue with the sentiment.

Wolves always believed that the quick pass over or through the Leeds defence would pay off and adopted this approach from the first minute, when an early ball from Lee Naylor sent Dougie Freedman to the left-hand byline. The problem was that the soundness of the idea was consistently let down by the poverty of the execution.

With 82 minutes gone and a replay looking a near-certainty Freedman held the ball up well under pressure as Goodman drifted into space with no Leeds defender closing him down.

Martin Hiden, the nearest man, failed to recognise the danger as Carl Robinson took possession from Freedman and threaded a pass through a narrowing gap.

Goodman calmly chipped the winning goal past the advancing Nigel Martyn, only for Wolves' rejoicing to be cut short five minutes later when Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink suckered Robbie Keane into bringing him down in the penalty area. Hans Segers, guessing right, flung himself hard left to keep out Hasselbaink's kick and Wolves managed to hold out.

The investment by Wolves' chairman Sir Jack Hayward is at last promising a dividend.

Semi-final draw: Coventry City or Sheffield United v Newcastle United. Wolverhampton Wanderers v Arsenal or West Ham United

Women's World Cup Qualifier: England 0 Germany 1

Germans exploit broad gap in class

Jon Brodkin at the New Den

DIFFERENT gender, same old story. England take on Germany in a crucial international and come off second best. At least the women were saved the heartache of a penalty shoot-out.

A first-half goal by Sandra Smisek dealt a severe blow to England's chances of qualifying for the finals in the United States next year, but England's defeat by the European champions at Millwall's ground was neither a surprise nor a disgrace.

Germany have now won all 10 of the matches between the two countries. However, although it was 11 against 11 on the pitch last Sunday, in effect it was 40 against 1; the rapidly growing women's game in England now involves around 14,000 players but Germany can select from a pool of close to 600,000.

After two defeats from their first three matches, a place in the play-offs offers England's best hope of qualifying from this particular Group of Death. Ted Copeland's team are in a group that includes the world champions Norway. Holland, who were beaten by England at West Ham but sprang a surprise defeat on Germany at the tail end of last year, are also in the group.

The turning point for Copeland came after half an hour. Birgit Prinz, who was a handful with her pace throughout, burst between two defenders and crossed for Smisek to score with a shot that Rachel Brown could only palm into the corner of the net.

Copeland, whose previous jobs included a spell in charge of Saudi Arabia's Under-18 men's team, declared himself satisfied with the performance of a team that by the end included six teenagers. "Overall we were pleased with the display," he said. "We are disappointed but we felt we played well and it was encouraging for us, particularly with younger players in the team. We were unlucky not to get a draw."

In truth, England rarely threatened to tame Germany. They battled hard but faded after a bright opening, saw Hope Powell have a long-range shot tipped over the bar, and were fortunate not to lose more heavily.

Yet England can take encouragement from some fine individual performances. Gillian Coultard, winning her 104th cap, buzzed to good effect in midfield and later in defence, and Kelly Smith impressed with her skill and willingness to take players on.

Football results and tables

FA Cup sixth round:
Arsenal 1, West Ham 1; Coventry 1, Sheff Utd 1; Leeds 0, Wolves 1; Newcastle 3, Barnsley 1.

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP:
Chelsea 0, Aston Villa 1; Liverpool 2, Bolton 1. Sheff Wed 2, Man Utd 0; Soton 2, Everton 1.

NATIONWIDE FOOTBALL LEAGUE:
Division One:
Birminghm 1, QPR 0; Bury 1, Norwich 0; Crewe 1, Nottm For 4; Ipswich 3, Charlton 1. Man City 0, Oxford 2; Reading 0, Port Vale 3; Stoke 1, Huddersfld 2; Sunderlnd 4, Stockport 1; Swindon 0, Portsmth 1; WBA 1, Bradford 1.

Division Two:
Blackpool 1, Watford 1; Brentford 3, Bournemth 2; Bristol R 0, Northmptn 2; Chesterfld 0, Fulham 2; Luton 0, Wycombe 0; Millwall 1, Gillingham 0; Plymouth 2, Preston 0; Southend 0, Grimsby 1; Walsall 0, Burnley 0; Wrexham 2, Carlisle 2; York 2, Wigan 2.

Division Three:
Brighton 0, Hartlepool 0; Hull 1, Darlington 1; L Orient 1, Lincoln 0; Macclesfld 0, Rotherham 0; Mansfield 1, Shrewsbry 1; Notts Co 2, Barnet 0; Peterboro 1, Exeter 1; Rochdale 1, Chester 1; Sc'thorpe 1, Colchester 0; Swansea 1, Cardiff 1; Torquay 0, Cambridge 3.

Tennents Scottish Cup:
[illegible]
Hearts 4, Ayr 1. Rangers X, Dundee X.

BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE:
Premier Division:
Dunfermline 2, Motherwell 1

First Division:
Raith 1, Airdrie 1; St Mirren 0, Stirling A 2.

Second Division:
Brechin P, Livingston P; Clydebank P, East Fife P, Clyde 0, Stenhsmr 0; Queen Sth 5, Forfar 1, Inverness CT 1, Stranraer 2.

Third Division:
Albion 2, Dumbarton 2; Alloa 3, Montrose 2; Arbroath 1, Ross Co 1; Cowdnbth P, E Stirling P; Queens Pk 2, Berwick 1.

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Man Utd	29	18	5	6	57	21	59
Liverpool	29	14	8	7	48	29	50
Arsenal	26	13	9	4	45	26	48
Blackburn	27	13	9	5	49	33	48
Chelsea	28	14	3	11	52	31	45
Derby	28	13	6	9	44	34	45
Leeds	28	12	6	10	36	30	42
Leicester	28	10	10	8	34	28	40
West Ham	27	12	4	11	38	36	40
Southampton	29	12	4	13	36	38	40
Coventry	28	10	9	9	35	35	39
Sheff Wed	29	10	7	12	43	51	37
Aston Villa	29	10	6	13	31	39	36
Newcastle	27	9	7	11	26	31	34
Wimbledon	26	8	8	10	28	30	32
Everton	29	7	9	13	33	42	30
Tottenham	29	8	6	15	26	44	30
Barnsley	27	7	4	16	24	63	25
Bolton	28	4	12	12	24	45	24
Crystal Palace	27	5	8	14	21	41	23

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE

Division One

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nottm Forest	36	21	8	7	60	33	71
Sunderland	35	20	8	7	66	37	68
Middlesbrough	35	20	8	7	65	36	68
Charlton	36	18	8	10	63	46	62
Ipswich	36	15	13	8	59	38	58
Sheff Utd	34	15	13	6	50	37	58
Birmingham	36	15	12	9	49	30	57
Stockport	37	16	6	15	60	53	54
Wolverhampton	34	15	7	12	44	36	52
West Brom	37	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	42	51
Bradford	37	12	13	12	38	39	49
Crewe	37	14	5	18	45	53	47
Swindon	36	13	7	16	36	51	46
Oxford Utd	36	12	8	16	45	50	44
Norwich	37	11	11	15	36	56	44
QPR	37	10	13	14	42	51	43
Bury	37	8	18	11	35	43	42
Portsmouth	36	11	7	18	40	51	40
Tranmere	35	10	10	15	37	42	40
Man City	37	10	9	18	41	44	39
Huddersfield	37	10	9	18	39	67	39
Reading	36	10	9	17	36	59	39
Port Vale	37	10	8	19	42	53	38
Stoke	37	8	13	16	35	52	37

Division Two

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Watford	36	20	11	5	53	30	71
Bristol City	36	20	9	7	58	29	69
Grimsby	34	16	10	8	45	27	58
Northampton	37	15	13	9	42	30	58
Fulham	36	16	9	11	46	32	57
Gillingham	36	15	9	12	44	42	54
Wrexham	35	14	12	9	44	42	54
Bristol Rovers	36	15	8	13	53	53	53
Bournemouth	36	13	11	12	46	41	50
Oldham	35	12	13	10	48	40	49
Chesterfield	37	11	15	11	34	35	48
Blackpool	36	13	8	15	46	53	47
York	36	11	14	11	42	45	47
Wycombe	37	11	14	12	41	46	47
Millwall	35	12	9	14	36	42	45
Walsall	34	11	10	13	35	38	43
Preston	36	11	9	16	40	43	42
Carlisle	36	11	8	17	48	53	41
Wigan	34	11	8	15	48	53	41
Plymouth	36	9	12	15	44	54	39
Luton	36	9	12	15	40	51	39
Brentford	37	8	14	15	39	58	38
Burnley	35	8	11	16	40	48	35
Southend	36	9	7	20	36	63	34

Division Three

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Notts County	37	24	9	4	66	35	81
Torquay	37	19	8	10	59	46	65
Macclesfield	37	17	12	8	49	33	63
Barnet	37	17	10	10	52	40	61
Scarborough	36	16	9	11	58	50	57
Rotherham	37	15	12	10	56	37	57
Leyton Orient	36	15	10	11	48	33	55
Lincoln City	36	14	13	9	42	42	55
Colchester	37	15	9	13	55	51	54
Chester	37	15	9	13	51	44	54
Scunthorpe	36	14	9	13	44	45	51
Exeter	37	12	14	11	53	49	50
Mansfield	37	12	12	13	48	44	48
Hartlepool	37	10	18	9	46	40	48
Darlington	36	12	10	14	47	57	46
Cambridge Utd	37	10	15	12	46	47	45
Shrewsbury	35	11	11	13	45	42	44
Cardiff	37	7	21	9	39	40	42
Swansea	37	11	8	18	40	51	41
Rochdale	37	12	5	20	39	45	41
Hull	37	8	6	23	45	69	30
Brighton	37	5	13	19	29	52	28
Doncaster	36	3	7	26	22	58	16

BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE

Premier Division

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Celtic	27	16	4	5	53	18	52
Hearts	27	17	5	5	61	36	56
Rangers	27	15	9	3	60	30	54
Kilmarnock	27	9	8	10	29	45	35
St Johnstone	27	9	6	12	28	34	33
Dundee Utd	27	7	10	10	37	40	31
Aberdeen	27	7	8	12	29	42	29
Dunfermline	27	7	8	12	31	52	29
Motherwell	27	7	5	15	36	48	26
Hibernian	27	4	7	16	30	49	19

First Division

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dundee	27	16	8	3	42	16	56
Falkirk	27	14	6	7	45	34	48
Raith	26	12	7	7	38	25	43
Airdrie	27	10	11	6	32	30	41
Hamilton	26	8	10	9	35	37	34
St Mirren	27	8	6	13	32	41	30
Gr Morton	27	7	8	12	36	42	29
Stirling	27	6	10	11	37	48	28
Ayr	27	7	7	13	30	44	28
Partick	27	5	10	12	35	46	25

Second Division

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Clydebank	26	13	10	3	37	19	49
Livingston	25	11	8	6	40	30	41
Queen of South	26	11	6	9	42	38	39
Stranraer	27	10	7	10	41	38	37
Forfar	26	9	8	9	43	47	35
Stenhousemuir	27	9	7	11	35	40	34
East Fife	26	10	4	12	35	46	34
Inverness Cal	26	7	9	10	49	40	30
Clyde	27	8	10	11	30	40	[illegible]
Brechin	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	32	46	[illegible]

Third Division

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Alloa	26	17	2	7	56	30	53
Arbroath	26	13	6	7	50	33	45
East Stirling	26	13	3	10	36	33	42
Ross County	24	11	7	6	46	28	40
Albion	24	11	5	8	44	44	38
Berwick	26	8	8	10	35	40	32
Queen's Park	27	8	8	11	31	37	32
Montrose	26	8	5	13	40	59	29
Cowdenbeath	26	9	1	16	25	44	28
Dumbarton	27	4	9	14	33	49	21

Rugby Union: Five Nations Championship

Irish discover new lease of life

Robert Armstrong at the Stade de France

IRELAND, beaten 18-16 last Saturday but far from humbled, struck an important blow for the credibility of the Five Nations Championship with their most impressive performance against the French since their 15-15 draw in Dublin 13 years ago.

True, the lacklustre Tricolores did ultimately scrape home with a short-range try by their captain Raphael Ibanez from a drive maul, but Ireland played a brand of exciting counter-attacking rugby that was streets ahead of what the much hyped England team had to offer at the Stade de France a month ago.

Warren Gatland, the newly appointed coach, has injected a powerful dose of self-confidence into a squad who look in good physical shape as a result of the conscientious work put in by his predecessor Brian Ashton. To the surprise of many, Ireland lasted the full 80 minutes in excellent order, driving the French deep into their own 22 and going agonisingly close to scoring a second try in the final quarter.

The Irish were bitterly disappointed to have blown their chance seven minutes from the end, having taken the game to the French for much of the afternoon. For their part, the French wore the bemused look of men who have recently received news of a stay of execution.

Ireland's fly-half Eric Elwood gave a commanding display and clearly Ireland ought to build their World Cup preparations around the gifted Connacht man. Apart from a costly late knock-on, Conor O'Shea had a faultless outing at full-back and Denis Hickie, whose 50-metre interception try made him the first Irishman to cross the line in Paris for 18 years, emphasised the value of an out-and-out flier.

None of Ireland's scores, which included three penalty goals by Elwood, would have been achieved without their bold hard-hitting forwards. So brutal were the exchanges up front that the Irish finished with three front-row substitutes on the field.

In the end the Irish lost because they could not conjure up a second try; Maggs knocked on a difficult pass metres from the line and at the death Costello, with one defender between him and the line, threw a pass into the arms of a Frenchman.

Ireland enjoyed their golden hour, leading 13-3 and 16-6, and they might still have won after Philippe Bernat-Salles scored a long-range try on the hour; Ibanez admitted he will never fashion a more welcome score than the try that ultimately broke Irish hearts.

Table

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
France	3	3	0	0	93	49	6
England	2	1	0	1	77	60	2
Wales	2	1	0	1	45	73	2
Scotland	3	1	0	2	46	86	2
Ireland	2	0	0	2	32	36	0

Down to earth . . . Xavier Garbajosa tackles Irish captain Keith Wood at the Stade de France PHOTOGRAPH: MICHEL LIPCHITZ

Wales 19 Scotland 13

Scots' mistakes put spring in Welsh step

Ian Malin at Wembley

THE DAFFODILS were out on a grassy bank beside Wembley Way as Wales put the nightmare of their visit to Twickenham two weeks earlier behind them in spring sunshine last Saturday.

Their supporters can now sleep easy about a trip to Dublin, and even the visit here of France next month will not cause them such restless nights.

But, whisper it in the Valleys, Scotland really should have secured their second away victory of this topsy-turvy Five Nations Championship. They were expected to play an attritional game against Wales but instead donned the warpaint and came out like a bunch of extras from Braveheart.

From the kick-off when full-back Derrick Lee ran the ball from their own 22, Scotland stretched the play across Wembley's wide open spaces. Yet in the end they were outdone by their bold approach and by their mistakes.

Scotland's biggest blunder came during the second half. First Rowen Shepherd, who had replaced the injured Lee after half an hour, kicked ahead when his flanker Adam Roxburgh was on his shoulder screaming for a try-scoring pass.

Ten minutes later came the game's most controversial moment when Gareth Thomas's late-tackle on Craig Chalmers was penalised by a penalty that the hapless Shepherd put wide. The Scots argued that Rob Wainwright was in the clear for a try and that advantage should have been played.

Scotland started well with Gregor Townsend running in a try from 30 metres out after eight minutes. When Damian Cronin crashed over for a try five minutes before half-time, they were 13-3 ahead and Wales, as their coach Kevin Bowring said, were forced to dig deep.

Arwel Thomas, on for Neil Jenkins at the end of the first quarter after the fly-half had clashed heads with Lee and suffered a gash just beneath the eye, took his chance with both hands. His three penalties ultimately separated the sides but it was those hands that really moulded the victory.

Thomas's speedy passes gave Wales's own game width and he engineered their try, Wayne Proctor's 10th for Wales, three minutes after the interval. The fly-half converted imperiously from the touchline.

Sports Diary Mike Kiely

Swiss role angers Jürgen

A CASE perhaps of Herr today, gone tomorrow for struggling Tottenham Hotspur after a clash between coach Christian Gross and star striker Jürgen Klinsmann led the German international to announce that "we will go in different directions" at the end of the season.

Klinsmann, who arrived just before Christmas from Serie A side Sampdoria to help the north London club in their battle to avoid relegation, has failed to recapture the form that made him a darling of the White Hart Lane crowd during the 1994-95 season.

The clash with Gross apparently centred around team selection and in particular the role of French international David Ginola. "I have the greatest respect for what Jürgen has achieved in a long and successful international career but he is still a squad member and has to accept my decisions," said the Swiss coach.

Another striker making headlines off the pitch was Aston Villa's Stan Collymore. In the wake of the Midlands side's defeat of Liverpool in the Premiership, the $11.5 million centre forward accused Steve Harkness of subjecting him to racial abuse during and after the match, a charge vehemently denied by the Anfield player. The matter is being investigated by the Professional Footballers' Association.

In Europe, England's three remaining club sides acquitted themselves well in the first legs of their quarterfinal ties: in the Champions Cup, Manchester United drew 0-0 in Monte Carlo against Monaco; Chelsea beat Real Betis 2-1 in Seville; while Aston Villa lost 1-0 to Atletico Madrid in Spain.

IN Rugby Union's Premiership One, league leaders Saracens defeated Wasps 33-27 while third placed Leicester drew 15-15 with Northampton. Lower down the table Harlequins ended a spell of five successive defeats, disposing of Richmond 41-12.

THE fall-out from January's controversy at the World Swimming championships in Australia, which saw five Chinese competitors embroiled in a drugs controversy, continued when an anti-doping task-force made up of drug experts and scientists met in Lausanne, Switzerland, to discuss the elimination of performance-enhancing drugs. Tough sanctions are promised.

SCOTLAND'S Andrew Coltart won his first European Tour title at the Qatar Masters to make it a double celebration: the 27-year-old has also topped the Australasian Order of Merit. Meanwhile his fellow countryman Colin Montgomerie has not got off to the best of starts on the American tour, missing the cut at the Doral Ryder Open. The European No 1 blamed his failure on putting problems: "I am going to the putting green and I am not going to leave it until I have found a solution." Montgomerie's state of mind has probably not been helped my a hostile press reception in the US, one report describing him as "the gael-force windbag".

Coltart: Qatar Masters title

IT WAS a case of man overboard for Whitbread Race contender Innovation Kvaerner, as Frenchman Pierre Mas was sacked by Norwegian skipper Knut Frostad. With the sixth leg, from Brazil to Florida, scheduled for the weekend, the yacht lies sixth after failing to repeat the promise shown in the opening two legs. It hasn't all been plain sailing for Toshiba either — the boat was disqualified from the fifth leg of the race and had 65 points deducted for illegal use of its main engine which, according to race rules, must not be engaged to "gain material advantage" over a competitor.

ANDRE Agassi appears to be finding his form again after a disastrous year. The US tennis player carried off the ATP Scottsdale Tournament title, defeating Australian Jason Stollenberg 6-4, 7-6 in Arizona.

Shiv Sharma is on holiday

Cricket

Pakistan lack heart to survive

Paul Weaver in Port Elizabeth

DAVE RICHARDSON, the former South Africa wicket-keeper turned television commentator, has a nice line in spoonerisms. When bowler Allan Donald was creating mayhem, he observed: "This comes as no surprise to me. St George's Park is a happy grunting hound for Allan."

Unfortunately for Pakistan, the venue also became a happy grunting hound for Fanie de Villiers, Paul Adams, Shaun Pollock and anyone else who bothered to turn his arm over against this shambles of a batting side.

When the South Africa captain Hansie Cronje declared his side's innings closed at 206 for seven halfway through the afternoon session on Monday, setting Pakistan 394 to win in nine hours, no one really expected the touring side to get there. What was expected of the visitors was a degree of commitment, a certain measure of atonement for their first-innings performance, when they were bowled out for just 106.

There was, however, none. Pakistan were all out for 134, surviving only 26 minutes into the final day.

This was the old Pakistan we know and despair of. In Durban, they had paraded their superior talent and South Africa simply could not keep up. Here the home side unveiled their fighting heart and Pakistan's response was to shrink back into the shadows.

In Madras, in the first Test between India and Australia, Sachin Tendulkar struck an unbeaten 155 to assure India victory. After declaring at 418 for four in their second innings, setting Australia 348 to win, India removed the visitors' top three batsmen for 31 by stumps on the fourth day.

Australia finally slumped to a 179-run defeat on the fifth day after being bowled out for 168.

India, who trailed by 71 in their first innings, declared an hour before the close after Tendulkar had hit 14 fours and four sixes. They then ripped into the tourists.

The fifth day saw four wickets fall controversially before lunch. On each occasion the Australian batsmen, Mark Waugh, Paul Reiffel, Ricky Ponting and Steve Waugh came close to contesting decisions by umpires George Sharp and Srinivas Venkataraghvan. Subsequent video evidence appeared to lend weight to the visitors' sense of injustice.

Earlier Tendulkar, dismissed cheaply by Shane Warne in the first innings, spared no one in the second, pulling Warne for a huge six over midwicket and in the next over hitting a ball from the medium-pacer Greg Blewett against a hoarding beyond the mid-on fence. In the next Warne over he was hammered way beyond extra cover and the off-spinner Gavin Robertson provided Tendulkar with his last six.